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BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON,

Printed for T. CADELL, (Succeſſor to Mr. MILLAR) in the Strand.

MDCCLXX.

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By LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, Esq.

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THE

FORCED MARRIAGE,

A TRAGEDY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR MDCCLIV.

THE following Play, which was written chiefly with a view to expoſe a moſt cruel and abſurd piece of tyranny too common in life, might have appeared upon the Stage many years ago: If the Author could have dangled after Managers; or have uſed the acceſs he had been offered to the proſtituted patronage of two or three *great* Men, to whoſe taſte he did not chuſe to appeal; or after all, if any but the two female characters could have been properly repreſented at the time when the piece was finiſhed.

The SCENE,

A Hall in STRENI's Caſtle, in the Kingdom of NAPLES.

THE

FORCED MARRIAGE,

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

STRENI, VICTORIA, *a Servant.*

STRENI.

GO, call her hither; — go! — your miſtreſs, woman,
My hopeful daughter!

VICTORIA.

O not yet, my Lord.
You are too warm — indeed you are.

STRENI.

Well then,
I'll never ſee her more. Go tell her ſo. —
Away!

SCENE II.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Compoſe yourſelf, my Lord.

STRENI.

My daughter
To fly my houſe! to make herſelf and me
The public jeſt! 'tis monſtrous!

VICTORIA.

But, my Lord—

STRENI.

Fly from her own good fortune to a nunnery!
She ſhould have pin'd her life out there, amongſt
The peeviſh ſiſterhood.—But I'm too gentle;
I've been too kind a parent; that's my fault,
And I deſerve this.—
Had I been ſtern, as many fathers are,
She durſt as well have leapt the battlements
As ſtolen this flight.

VICTORIA.

'Tis true, my Lord, you have been
A tender father; and my couſin knows it.

STRENI.

STRENI.

The day too fixed—and with her own conſent—
The match above her proudeſt hopes—a prize
Scarce to be dreamt of!—Death and diſtraction!
This luckleſs wretch's flight will ruin all!
O God! O God!

VICTORIA.

Nay, never fear the Count.
He'll hardly flinch, his love's too obſtinate
For that; I'll anſwer for his conſtancy,
As little as I know him.

STRENI.

What doſt thou ſay,
VICTORIA? Yes, there's comfort in that thought.—
All may be well yet, think'ſt thou?—I'm glad, however,
This raſh young Hector has not ſwept her off.
She's here, ſhe's ſafe; and all my fears from him
Are gone: thank heaven for that!—My dear VICTORIA,
What wouldſt thou ſay? thou hadſt ſomething to impart—
Come, ſpeak.

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I know not what to ſay:
You're grown ſo choleric that I dare not ſpeak.

You did not uſe to be thus. I remember
When, without fear or thinking twice, I durſt
Give all my follies their full play before you.
But this unwonted rage quite frightens me;
It checks my utterance: yet, what need I fear
Leſt ought too careleſs ſhould eſcape my tongue,
When I'm not heard?

STRENI.

Forgive me, my VICTORIA.
You ſee how grievouſly I am provoked.
Anger forgets good manners; pardon me:
I now am calm, I am myſelf again.
Speak what thou wilt, as unreſtrained as ever.

VICTORIA.

I ſhall offend.

STRENI.

Fear not. If thou haſt ought
That burns within here, boldly give it vent.
I am not yet I hope ſo peeviſh grown
As to take fire at any friendly freedom.
I know thou meanſt us well.

VICTORIA.

Heaven knows I do.

STRENI.

STRENI.

Then freely ſpeak thy mind.

VICTORIA.

Well then, my Lord,
Since I have leave to ſpeak, and may be heard;
This marriage—muſt it be?

STRENI.

It muſt, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

In earneſt?

STRENI.

Surely.

VICTORIA.

Then I'm ſorry for it.
And, STRENI, tho' to contradict your wiſdom
May miſbecome my ſex, ſtill more my years;
Yet in OLYMPIA's cauſe I will be plain,
And right or wrong declare my inmoſt thoughts.
Two ſiſters bore us; but I love OLYMPIA
More for her ſweet and generous qualities
Than all theſe ties of blood. At your command
I come to ſee the nuptial rites performed:
But if her mind is ſo averſe, I'd rather
Weep at her funeral, tho' my heart ſhould break.

STRENI.

STRENI.

You cannot think I love my daughter leſs
Than you, VICTORIA; or leſs know her intereſt.
What other motive than paternal love
Could make me urge this marriage?

VICTORIA.

Urge a marriage!
That rigid tie which death alone diſſolves!
That bold deciſive ſtep, which fixes us
In happineſs or miſery for ever!
That ſtate which is a lottery at the beſt,
But ventured on with coyneſs and reluctance
Has little chance to proſper! All things elſe
To this are trifles, and not worth diſputing.
Prevent a giddy marriage when you can;
But never urge the wiſeſt.

STRENI.

How you dictate!
But I have told more years than you, have ſeen
A little more of life too; and 'tis hard
If old experience has not taught me ſomething.
'Tis ſtrange if paſſion, prejudice, and youth
Decide more ſoundly than deliberate reaſon,
That ſees the objects in diſpute diveſted

Of

Of falſe lights and infatuating fogs.
Pray, of two judges qualified ſo differently,
Which is the likelieſt to determine right?

VICTORIA.

Doubtleſs, my Lord, the judge who ſits ſerene
Above all miſts of paſſion. But where is he?
Youth has its follies: and when theſe decline,
A paſſion ſprings, they ſay, that blinds the ſoul
As much as that gay dotage Love itſelf.
A certain flower of winter!—Fy upon it!—
They call it ——— Avarice.

STRENI.

You're a ſaucy girl,
And always was ſo: that pretty head of thine
Has too much pertneſs in it.

VICTORIA.

Pardon me,
My Lord; but either now, or henceforth never
Can I with any grace or decency
Claim thoſe bold licences your goodneſs uſed
T' indulge me in. Suppoſe you now at play
With a Piedmonteſe ſharper; one that had broke
An hundred banks; a dextrous knave that cheats you
At every throw: and I a looker on.
Should it offend you, if by a wink or hem,

Or

Or pinching of your arm, I gave you hints
Of this accompliſh'd villain? My Lord, my Lord,
This common cheat, this hankering after more,
Betrays the wiſeſt to ſtrange weakneſſes.
How elſe could this e'er happen? STRENI's daughter,
Rich STRENI's only child, has made (and not
Without her father's warrant too) a fair
Exchange of hardly-violable vows, with
A youth whoſe qualities and accompliſhments
Equal his noble birth. Heaven! what ſhould hinder
Such lovers to be happy? — A richer man,
Better allied, of finer diſpoſitions
Or parts, I dare not ſay — but ſurely older,
Steps in; and STRENI, never famed for blundering,
The ſoundeſt judge of other men's proceedings,
Prefers his ſuit; th' indulgent father grows
A tyrant, where he leaſt ſhould uſe his power.
It is ſo ſtrange, I ſhall believe in witchcraft!
'Tis plain infatuation!

STRENI.

Surely older!
Ay, there's the crime no merit can attone for.
Better be raſh, hot-headed, paſſion's ſlave;
Better be mad, and young; than old with all

Th' ad-

Th' advantages that can conſiſt with years,
Yet CLAUDIO's not ſo very old.

VICTORIA.

No, not
Much turned of fifty.

STRENI.

Be it as you will;
He is for pleaſing manners, even for perſon,
A more engaging man than fifty ſuch
As thoſe whom youth and folly recommend
To ruin half your ſex.

VICTORIA.

You think him ſo, my Lord.
But does OLYMPIA think ſo? that's material.
Taſte is ſo various, what engages one
Diſguſts another: and 'tis vain to dictate
To this deſpotic principle of nature.
Yet, if it muſt be ſo, you ſhould preſcribe
Where I ſhall live, and how; what I ſhall wear;
Even what companions ſhall engroſs my time
For days, for weeks, for months; tho' this might prove
A cruel treſpaſs on my native freedom;
But let my friend for life, my fortune's lord,
On whom depends my bliſs or miſery,
Be of my own approving: here at leaſt,

In this one inſtance may my choice be free.
I have ſeen the Count, and—.

STRENI.

Well, what think you of him?

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I muſt not touch irreverently
A character that boaſts your good opinion:
I dare not tamper with ſuch ſacred things.
Beſides I'm but a woman, and a young one;
And to be critical in ought but dreſs
Or dancing would not ſuit me. But, if you pleaſe,
I'll tell you what ſome, who pretend to judge
And think they know him, ſay.

STRENI.

Well, what? Come on.
What do they ſay, good couſin?

VICTORIA.

Firſt, they praiſe
His perſon; which they ſay is, for his years,
Specious enough; tall, jovial, ſleek and blooming,
As if 'twere May ſtill. Nor is his mind, they ſay,
Leſs youthful; for he's charmingly facetious;—
As far as mere corporeal jollity
Is wit and humour; but it ſeems no further.

For

For tho' he has laughed inceſſantly theſe forty years,
'Tis ſtrange, he has never blundered out one joke!
For his parts they ſay but little: that may be envy.
And yet they own that, from ſagacious ſelfiſhneſs,
And want of heart, he has cunning and deceit
Enough t' outwit ten cardinals; for beneath
An open, frank, unguarded-like behaviour,
A ſhew of ſmooth and dimpling innocence,
It ſeems he hides a quickſand: and they ſay
He has earned his wealth as boldly as conſiſts
With honeſt policy, and a juſt regard
For his own precious head.

STRENI.

A bold free hand
To ſketch a character out! The only thing
That's wanting here is likeneſs.

VICTORIA.

Nay, my Lord,
I only tell you what report ſays of him;
If that belies him 'tis no fault of mine.
I have heard indeed, that his manner, from facetious,
Is grown of late embarraſs'd and half ſad;
That he looks penſive, talks to himſelf, and when
He laughs, it ſeems an effort to diſguiſe

Some-

Some ſecret grief; which looks myſteriouſly
To thoſe who mark him. But the cauſe is plain:
'Tis love, 'tis fooliſh love, makes him ſo grave.—
A hopeful youth to grow love-penſive!—Lord!
I long to ſee him languiſh! It muſt be charming
To ſee him languiſh for a Lady's fortune!

STRENI.

Fortune! What's that to him, whoſe ample means,
Raiſed by his gallant ſervice in the war,
From the ſad ruins of an ancient ſeat,
Vie with the Princes of proud Italy?
What can a moderate portion add to him
So opulent, and yet without an heir?
If fortune were his aim he could have choice
Of richer matches; but he loves OLYMPIA;
He beſt deſerves her; and ſhe ſhall be his,
Or elſe no child of mine. Beſides, this ſpark,
This *youth* you ſo much boaſt of, by report
Ere now has found another bride.

VICTORIA.

Be that
As it may happen. But, alas! my Lord,
Muſt all the joys and comforts of her life
Be fondly ſacrificed to this ambition,

None

None of her own beſides, to give an heir
To——were it the firſt houſe in Italy?
But if there be ſuch charms in poſſibly
Bringing a boy, who poſſibly may live
T' inherit a great fortune, wear high titles,
And yet perhaps be neither great nor happy;
OLYMPIA, bleſt with every grace of nature,
With fortune's bounties, and your daughter too,
So young, may wait till other matches offer
More to her mind, perhaps as much to yours.
Nineteen is ſurely not a deſperate age;
'Tis even too young to be unplum'd into
That tame domeſtic creature called a Wife,
And quit the careleſs pleaſures of the world.
Nay, 'tis not decent at theſe years to grow
A ſober matron.

STRENI.

How thou rambleſt on!—
But I am old, my child; I have not long
To live, not many years; and 'tis my wiſh,
My favourite aim, before I die, to ſee
My daughter ſettled in a ſolid ſtate
Of happineſs. That done, my reſt of life

Becomes a holiday, that chearful calm
Which age delights in: and I ſhall———

SCENE III.

STRENI, VICTORIA, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,
There's one juſt now arrived with ſome diſpatches.
He has rode all night to bring you.

STRENI.

I'll ſee him preſently.
Go tell OLYMPIA that this Lady here
Expects her company.

SCENE IV.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

STRENI.

My dear VICTORIA,
I'll leave you to your couſin's entertainment
A little while.

VICTORIA.

I'll go myſelf and find her.

SCENE

SCENE V.

VICTORIA.

Who could believe this good old man, ſo eaſy
So gentle otherways, ſhould in this caſe
Prove ſo inflexible! But here comes OLYMPIA.—
Alas, how altered!—

SCENE VI.

VICTORIA, OLYMPIA.

VICTORIA.

Ah, my deareſt couſin!—
Come, we're alone.

OLYMPIA.

Welcome to my ſad heart!—
What need have I of ſuch a cordial ſight!

VICTORIA.

Poor dear OLYMPIA!—How catching are thy tears!—
Thy griefs are mine. Would I could bear them for thee!

OLYMPIA.

How I have long'd to ſee my only friend,
My kind companion!—Now ſhe comes too late;
For I'm undone for ever!

VICTORIA.

It muſt not be:
All is not loſt yet.—Bleſs me! thy hands burn mine—
Thou art not well.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! did you know, VICTORIA,
What I have ſuffered ſince we parted laſt,
You'd wonder that this mortal frame ſo long
Could bear ſuch miſery.

VICTORIA.

Come, dry thy tears.
The worſt is paſt.—Your father will relent:
He needs muſt yield at laſt.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! never, never!—
To-morrow, for ought that yet appears, compleats
My wretchedneſs.

VICTORIA.

Good Heaven! it muſt not be.
What! be engaged by force in vows ſo ſolemn!
'Tis madneſs to ſuppoſe it.

OLYMPIA.

Either it muſt be ſo,
Or I muſt live an out-caſt in the world,

With

With all my father's curſes on my head.—
That's my hard ſentence.

VICTORIA.

Never till this moment
Have I once dreamt what happineſs it was
To own a little fortune uncontroll'd
By any human caprice.—'Tis thine, OLYMPIA!—
Heavens! We ſhall be the happieſt two that live!—
I ſay 'tis thine!

OLYMPIA.

My generous kind VICTORIA!
But can I bear my father's fix'd diſpleaſure?—
Tho' to my daily grief I have found of late
His tenderneſs eſtrang'd, I am not yet
So harden'd with unkindneſs to endure
To loſe his ſmiles for ever.

VICTORIA.

That fear is vain.
Your father is not of ſo ſtern a make.
He cannot tear you from his heart; in him
Nature defies it: this ſeverity
Is but put on, and coſts him many a pang,
No doubt, to urge you to what he conceives
Your greateſt happineſs.—But I long, OLYMPIA,
To hear the whole of thy diſaſtrous tale.

For this long abſence of two years, while all
Intelligence has been ſhut up between us,
Has kept me ſtill in painful ignorance
Of what has paſt. The general part indeed
I know too well; but for particulars
All I have learnt is merely from report;
Whoſe ſpecious lies diſcredit every truth
It chances to throw out. I left you bleſt
In the gay ſpring of love. A view more charming
Of all that's ſweet in th' harmony of ſouls
Was never ſeen: your father too then ſeemed
To hold ALPHONSO as his own; as one
Soon to become his ſon-in-law.

OLYMPIA.

'Tis true:
And till my father had diſcloſed his mind,
To give a ſanction to ALPHONSO's vows;
Whatever tenderneſs poſſeſs'd my ſoul,
I let it fondly prey upon itſelf;
My eyes ne'er told it, and much leſs my tongue,
I hid my conſcious bluſhes as I could,
My fault'ring ſpeech was virgin baſhfulneſs,
And if I trembled 'twas alarm, not love.
Oh! I could burſt, and on thy friendly boſom
Breathe out my ſoul, VICTORIA, to remember

The

The dear enchantments of thoſe happy days!
It was a ſweet diſeaſe, a charming dream,
And but a dream, of happineſs. At laſt
We were contracted by the mutual will
Of both our parents; and a diſtant day
Fix'd for the nuptials; when, alas!—

VICTORIA.

I know
This CLAUDIO ſaw you; this rich Count: would he
And all his millions in a mine had been
Blown to the Moon, that luckleſs hour he came
Blundering to blaſt ſuch hopeful buds of joy!
How I could curſe him!—But my dear OLYMPIA,
I interrupt your ſtory.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! my father,
Dazzled with CLAUDIO's wealth, and by his arts
Of moſt immoderate ſhameleſs flattery won,
Grew cold to poor ALPHONSO; by degrees
Chang'd his familiar cordial entertainment
To dry civility, and ſhocking ceremony:
Seized every opportunity to leſſen him
In my affections, and to recommend
A ſtranger to my breaſt. 'Twas all in vain.

How could I hear him? Was it poſſible
To ſhift the pure devotion of my heart
From lov'd ALPHONSO to a golden idol?
Nay, to th' old object of ALPHONSO's hate?—
I own I ne'er attempted it. But from
That adverſe time the fortune of our loves
Has ſtill declined; and (ſtrange fatality!)
Soon after this another croſs event
Confirm'd the former.——

VICTORIA.

How?

OLYMPIA.

One night at court,
In the full ſplendor of a birth-day crowd,
A vain pert fool, a minion of the King's,
A coxcomb drunk with favour, ſnatch'd my hand
And rudely kiſs'd it; ſuch confuſion ſeiz'd me
I had almoſt ſunk: ALPHONSO, who was by,
Forgetful of the reverence of the place
And the King's preſence, with one deſperate blow
Laid the plum'd courtier ſprawling on the floor:
And for that haſty generous fault was baniſhed
From Naples to Palermo, for a twelvemonth.

VICTORIA,

VICTORIA.

Baniſh'd! Heaven's patience! Had he failed to do it
He had merited eternal baniſhment;
From Naples, Italy, from every land,
From all ſociety where honour's thought of.
Had I been King th' ill-manner'd fool who gave
The firſt offence, and brought the other on,
(Which was at worſt a noble raſhneſs) ſhould
Have bore the puniſhment alone,

OLYMPIA.

The King,
On due ſubmiſſions offered by ALPHONSO,
'Tis thought would freely have revoked the ſentence,
But for the ſecret practices of ſome
Who wiſh'd his abſence. Thoſe dark dealings made
All interceſſion vain; tho' for my ſake
He ſtoop'd to more than otherways, I know,
His generous pride would have conſented to.—
No remedy: he muſt depart, and leave me
A widowed bride; tho' firſt he preſs'd the nuptials,
He claimed my hand: that was denied; my father
Found ſome prudential reaſons to excuſe it
Till his return. ALPHONSO warmly urged
A private marriage: this my filial duty
Forbade; tho' elſe, with all my ſoul, I would

Have

Have been the partner of his baniſhment,
Not to Palermo, but to any deſart,
To Nature's wildeſt ſolitudes; I owed it,
Could ought be diſmal where ALPHONSO was,
To him who owed his baniſhment to me.
It was a mournful parting: one ſad year
Appeared an age; and till that age expired
Our only view of conſolation was
Such intercourſe as ſeparates from the dead
Our abſent friends. — But ſince that cruel day
Not one ſhort letter———

VICTORIA.

How? That's ſtrange, OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

'Tis no ſuch wonder. For this generous exile,
The hardly-uſed ALPHONSO, ſcarce had left
The gates of Naples, when my father hurried me
Down to theſe ancient melancholy walls,
Remote from Naples and all neighbourhood.
The real aim of this retreat, as from
Th' event appears too plain, was to cut off
All correſpondence with ALPHONSO, and thoſe
That might promote intelligence between us;
While this inſidious rival ſhould be favoured
With all advantages to undermine

My

My abſent love. For ever ſince I have known
This ſad retirement, this confinement rather,
My correſpondence has been ſtrictly watched
Like one in gaol for treaſon. No company
This twelvemonth have I ſeen but CLAUDIO,
And thoſe who with his odious praiſes chaſe
My perſecuted ears. I have been afraid
Of every morning's light; for every day
Has ſeen me flattered, threatened, and cajoled,
Tortured and teized, to what I moſt abhor.
What's worſe than theſe, ſtrange fancies haunt my mind,
And jealous cares purſue me, that my breaſt
Pants with perpetual terrors and alarms.
My health in ſickly languor pines away:
Kind ſleep forſakes me; and when harraſs'd Nature
Sinks in imperfect reſt, diſtracted dreams,
Worſe than my waking miſeries, ſhake me from
My frighted ſlumbers. Gracious Heaven defend me!
'Tis horrible to think how near the verge
Of madneſs I have been.

VICTORIA.

Alas, OLYMPIA!
What blaſts have ſhook thy gentle ſoul! But Heaven
And thine own fortitude will ſtill ſupport thee
To baffle all their rage.

OLYMPIA,

OLYMPIA.

My fortitude!
Alas! my little ſhare of that, VICTORIA,
Has failed me already; fatally has failed me.
For tired with endleſs teizing, glad to gain
Some reſpite from the preſent pain, at laſt
I promiſed in the weakneſs of my mind,
That if within three days beyond the term
In which ALPHONSO's baniſhment expir'd,
He did not claim my plighted faith, I ſhould
Reſign my hand to CLAUDIO. This I thought
Was no great venture. For tho' no letters came,
I hoped I knew the cauſe; nor would I doubt
ALPHONSO's faith, and purpoſe not to loſe
One day of liberty in abſence from me;
Theſe I remember were his words at parting.
But, ah VICTORIA! would that doleful year
Was yet not ended, that I ſtill might hope!

VICTORIA.

Is it then paſt?

OLYMPIA.

Two days ſince: and to-morrow
Decides my deſtiny.

VICTORIA.

But is there ought

In

In this, that at his father's inſtigation
ALPHONSO has commenced a nuptial treaty
With a Sicilian Lady?

OLYMPIA.

Such a rumour
Has, ſince that promiſe was extorted from me,
Been ſo induſtriouſly rung in my ears,
And managed with ſuch arts and aggravations,
It ſeemed, when the firſt ſhock was paſt, a fiction
Contriv'd to ſhake my faith, and drive me in
A hurry of reſentment to my ruin.
But by your looks you ſeem to apprehend
'Tis ſomething more—Perhaps you've heard he's married,
For Heaven's ſake do not flatter me, VICTORIA.
If it is ſo tell me.——— Ah!

VICTORIA.

Nay, dear OLYMPIA,
I tell you all I have heard; and that perhaps
Comes from the ſecret fountain-head of lies.
At leaſt if ſuch a treaty was confirmed
You might expect the earlieſt notice of it.
My life for't your intelligence in that
Would paſs without much barr or ſcrutiny.

OLYMPIA.

That's all my little comfort. But alas!

I know

I know not what to think of this delay.
Sometimes my melancholy whiſpers me
He has forgot or hates me, and in revenge of
My father's ſlights has left me. At other times
That probity, that unaffected warmth
Of love unchanged by ſhocking injuries;
Thoſe generous manners, th' inviolable honour
Which even his enemies admit, aſſure me
He cannot be ſo baſe to quit me thus,
Without ſome form at leaſt of taking leave.
Perhaps he has heard I'm married, and believes it;
Perhaps he is not well.—I'm all perplexity.
This agony of ſuſpence is perfect torture,
From which, to know that fate had done its worſt
Would be a kind of deſperate repoſe.—
Should he prove faithleſs, I have done, VICTORIA,
What you'll deſpiſe me for.

VICTORIA.

It cannot be.
You ne'er can ſtoop to ought that's really mean:
But what, dear couſin?

OLYMPIA.

As the time approach'd
Which was to prove deciſive of my fortune,
My fears encreaſed; my anxious throbbings grew

Quite

Quite infupportable; my fluttering breaſt
Could find no quiet. My reſtleſs brain at work
How to prevent the worſt, at laſt I found
A truſty meſſenger to bear with ſpeed
A letter to ALPHONSO; which explained
Whate'er was needful of my ſufferings paſt
And fears of worſe to come; and that if ſtill
He loved and meant to claim me, the leaſt delay
Might render that impoſſible. Ere this
I might have had ſome anſwer; but no news
Arriving, in deſpair laſt night I ſought
Protection in a monaſtry that ſtands
Amongſt the neighbouring mountains: there I paſt
The anxious night; but thither traced, this morning
I was demanded by th' authority of
My father in his vaſſals.

VICTORIA.

But the ſiſters,
The Abbeſs, Heaven! how could they yield you up
So tamely?——their protection!

OLYMPIA.

Do not blame them;
They did their utmoſt for me. I was received
With manners moſt reſpectfully obliging,
With tears of ſympathy, and fluttering care

To hide me panting from the hot purſuit.
But as my ſheltering place was ſoon diſcovered,
'Twas more it ſeems than they could anſwer for,
To brave my father's ſummons.—You ſee, VICTORIA,
How every refuge fails me. A ſhort time now
Remains for me to hope. Yet ſomething ſtill,
Whether the whiſperings of ſome friendly power,
Or the laſt effort of tenacious hope,
Suggeſts to my ſore mind that ere to-morrow
ALPHONSO will be here. But come what will
I ſhall not marry CLAUDIO; that's determined.—
I know one refuge from all miſery—
One cordial draught ſhall———

VICTORIA.

What?—Thy words are frightful!—
Heaven baniſh all ſuch thoughts!—Alas! OLYMPIA,
Thou lookſt thro' the falſe glaſs of Melancholy.
Truſt me there's nothing yet ſo deſperate here.
Whate'er may happen luckleſsly, the worſt
Is ſtill avoidable.—You ſhall be ſick—
Or take another flight.—We'll fly together.
I will ſecure you in a little fortreſs
Which to the General himſelf in perſon
Shall ſcarce ſurrender you at the firſt ſummons.
There are a thouſand ſhifts; more than we yet

Can

Can think of.—But the time is precious:
Come let us hide ourſelves, and plot together.
'Twill be a charming triumph, if we two,
In half a day, at one unlooked-for blow,
Can dreadful ſchemes demoliſh, which to rear
Has coſt much older heads a reſtleſs year.

ACT II. SCENE I.

STRENI.

What's to be done? Good God! theſe news confound me!
I cannot yet believe my eyes. Let me read
This letter again.——There's nothing in the world
But villainy and deluſion: knaves and dupes
Maintain this fooliſh farce of human life.——
Let me ſee———

" I am this moment informed that Count CLAUDIO is
" accuſed of ſome embezzlements and other perfidious
" practices during the late war, which render him ob-
" noxious to the State; and that warrants are actually
" iſſued out to apprehend him. I am ſorry this piece
" of news did not reach me till after my ſiſter VICTO-
" RIA's departure; but hope it will not come too late
" to prevent your engaging in ſo fatal an alliance. At
" leaſt, whether my information prove true or falſe, I
" thought myſelf obliged to give you this notice."—
Well, this cuts deep indeed! There all my hopes
My flattering ſchemes lie blaſted and o'erthrown.
The ſhock ſo ſtuns me that I yet ſcarce feel it.
Is it ſo then, CLAUDIO? Well, I find at laſt

This

This world is all a cheat, and there's no truſting
To fair appearances.—Would this had happened
A twelvemonth ſooner! what an anxious year
It would have ſaved me and my poor OLYMPIA!
Yet better now than a twelvemonth hence;—nay, than
To-morrow.—Bleſs me! how nearly have we 'ſcaped
The cruſh of this man's ruin!—It grieves my ſoul
When I look back on what my child has ſuffered,
And all for nothing. But, Heaven knows! whate'er
Was harſhly managed was ſtill kindly meant.
I long to lighten of a deadly weight
Her labouring breaſt, that flutters now with fear
T' approach me, and retards her trembling ſteps.
Could ſhe but gueſs the purpoſe of my meſſage
She 'd make more haſte to meet me.—But ſhe comes.

SCENE II.

STRENI, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

I am aſhamed to ſee my father's face:
But proſtrate thus and breathleſs at his feet
I beg forgiveneſs.

STRENI.

Riſe, OLYMPIA. Come,
Indeed it was not well.

OLYMPIA.

'Twas my deſpair
That did it.—Pardon me, my Lord—my father!

STRENI.

I do, my child, I do. You've never found me
An unrelenting parent: or if ever
I have given way to ſome auſterities,
My very tenderneſs provoked me to them,
My eager care to ſee you happy.

OLYMPIA.

My father,
You have been ever gracious, kind and tender;
Your goodneſs ſtill prevented all my wiſhes:
And it has coſt me many a painful throb
To be reduced, by thwarting obligations,
To act a ſtubborn part againſt your pleaſure.
I know your purpoſe is to make me happy:
But what's all ſplendor and ſuperfluous wealth,
What's all the world, to dear content of mind?—
My heart is not at my command: and yet
So far I could controul it, that was there one

Dear

Dear as my ſoul—I never would, without
My father's ſanction, change my vows with his:
There is but one thing you can urge and I
Not chearfully yield to. Were your ſacred life
To be redeemed with mine, oh! I ſhould fall
A willing victim: nothing there could combat
My filial duty. But to give the hand
To one while to another the heart's engaged,
Is ſomething ſo prophane, it looks ſo like
Baſe proſtitution, that the more I think on't
The more it ſhocks me.—Still my honoured father,
Let me implore your grace—'Tis not too late
To ſave me from this violation.

STRENI.

My child,
I will no longer to thy delicacy
Oppoſe the ſteadieſt purpoſe of my ſoul.
Indeed I'm ſorry to have urged ſo far
A match that ſhocks thee. To-morrow is the day
Thou dreadſt ſo much: but I would rather make
The greateſt power on earth my deadly foe
Than thee unhappy.

OLYMPIA.

O my gracious father!

Tears ſo o'erpower me that they choak my words—
But on my knees I thank you.—You're too good!

STRENI.

Come to my heart, my child: thou never waſt
A ſtranger there, nor ever can'ſt thou be
While it has vital warmth.

OLYMPIA.

My deareſt father,
This kindneſs makes at once a full amends
For all the griefs that I have ever known.—
I am too happy——

A SERVANT.

The Count, my Lord,
Is at the gates.

STRENI.

The Count!—what CLAUDIO?—well—
Conduct him in.—He comes betimes;—before
He was expected.—But—what ails my child—
Thou trembleſt and growſt pale!—Retire my child—
My poor OLYMPIA!—Well, 'tis plain enough
What all this hurry means. But ſoft and fair
Good Count! you come no further this way, Count,
Not one ſtep further. You little know——

SCENE

SCENE III.

STRENI, CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Good morrow,
And many happy days, to good Lord STRENI.

STRENI.

The ſame to you, Count CLAUDIO.—Who'd believe it!

CLAUDIO.

You cannot wonder that I thus prevent
My happieſt day: my love of dear OLYMPIA,
My warm ambition to be ſtiled your ſon,
Might well account for that.—But I have news,—
No bad ones neither.—Gueſs, my Lord.

STRENI.

How ſhould I?—
What mean you?

CLAUDIO.

Only this;—at laſt 'tis done
What we ſo long have laboured—ALPHONSO's married!
'Tis true—'tis paſt all doubt—I have ſure proofs on't.
And now OLYMPIA ſtands abſolved from all

Engagements there, which gives me double joy:
For it would damp all happineſs to ſhock
Her ſcrupulous honour; and indeed that thought
Has always check'd me—What! you're ſad, my Lord,

STRENI.

I have ſome reaſon. I am quite heart-ſick
Of ineffectual cares. I've done whate'er
Authority or gentle arts could do
To puſh this backward treaty, but find at laſt
'Tis all in vain. 'Twill never do, believe me.

CLAUDIO.

How's this, my worthy Lord? you quite amaze me!
I thought it had been fix'd.

STRENI.

It ſeem'd ſo; but
I cannot force my daughter's inclinations,

CLAUDIO.

I hope they are not now leſs kind to me
Than when the happy day was named.

STRENI.

Indeed,
Not to amuſe you with falſe complaiſance,
I think they rather are; for as the day
Draws nearer her reluctance grows more violent,

I cannot bear to ſee her agonies.
Could I compel her, as indeed I cannot,
I feel too much compunction in my breaſt
To uſe a power ſo tyrannous and unjuſt
Againſt my child. Nor would it ſuit your wiſdom
To yoke your years with an unwilling bride.
And as your friend, my Lord, I would diſſuade you
From further thoughts of this: extorted vows
Can never tend to happineſs.

CLAUDIO.

I hope
I do but dream! If not, your mind, my Lord,
Is ſtrangely altered for the time. Theſe difficulties
Till now have ne'er been thought of. But they're nothing:
For be affection e'er ſo coy, 'twill grow
At laſt with tender cheriſhing.

STRENI.

But its growth
Will not be forced. Let time and nature work.
Have patience. Let it reſt. A ſhort delay
Can breed no danger here. A month or two hence
Will do as well, or better.

CLAUDIO.

A month or two!
Heavens!

Heavens! that's an age to one who loves like me!—
No, no,—to-morrow—would it were to-day!

STRENI.

It cannot be to-day—nor yet to-morrow.

CLAUDIO.

How! not to-morrow? Ah! by all that's tender
Let me inſiſt on that, my deareſt Lord.

STRENI.

Urge me no further,

CLAUDIO.

For your own ſake, my Lord,
As well as mine, I muſt.—How will it ſound?
'Tis known ———

STRENI.

Suppoſe ALPHONSO had returned?
You know the terms ———

CLAUDIO.

He's married.

STRENI.

I'm ſorry for it.

CLAUDIO.

You joke.

STRENI.

STRENI.

Not I,
I'm not ſo merry,

CLAUDIO.

Sorry!

STRENI.

Yes, I ſay ſorry.

CLAUDIO.

Why?

STRENI.

My daughter loved him.—
And he's an honeſt man.

CLAUDIO.

There are many ſuch
I hope, my Lord.

STRENI.

Yes, hundreds who appear ſuch
To one that is,

CLAUDIO.

Good Heaven! What can this mean?——
But ſome men's favour is a ſlippery hold.
Not long ago ALPHONSO was diſmiſs'd
To make me room; now 'tis my turn to yield
To ſome new favourite. I ſee it plainly.

STRENI.

STRENI.

I ſhall not henceforth be too raſh in making
New friendſhips; — that I promiſe you.

CLAUDIO.

My Lord,
You aim at ſomething; what I know not: but
To one who almoſt lived upon your ſmiles,
That angry coyneſs in your look is death;
And every word you utter is ſo keen
It ſtings me to the heart. I could encounter
The rudeſt malice of indifferent men
With vengeance or contempt. But from the man
I love, and on whoſe love I built my happineſs,
Unkindneſs tortures while it wounds. — How have I
Deſerved this? ſure ſome ſecret foe of mine
Has been too buſy with your ear: for foes
I have, more than I know of. What little ſervices
I've done my country are by ſome repaid
With Envy: but I laugh at that, my Lord.
To one that's fortified in innocence
Such bolts are harmleſs: 'Tis as 'twere to batter
A fort with ſnow-balls. Yet it would be kind,
Nay 'tis but juſtice, if malicious tongues
Have tampered with my name, to let me know
Of what I ſtand accuſed.

STRENI,

STRENI.

You talk like one
Unconſcious of all blame: but boldneſs is not
Always the ſureſt teſt of innocence.

CLAUDIO.

What have I done?

STRENI.

Look backwards, and conſider.
Peruſe your life a little.

CLAUDIO.

There's nothing there
I dare not boldly look into. But what,
My Lord, does all this tend to?

STRENI.

Have you nothing
To ſettle with the ſtate?—

CLAUDIO.

To ſettle!—yes—
The ſtate is in my debt.

STRENI.

But has the ſtate
No claim on you?

CLAUDIO,

CLAUDIO.

For nothing but my ſervices
Whene'er it needs them.

STRENI.

Are you ſure of that?

CLAUDIO.

As ſure as that I live.

STRENI.

All-conſcious Heaven!
Was ever ſuch effrontery known!—D'ye think
We've no intelligence here? Or can you be
So ignorant of the dreadful ſtorm that hangs
Ready to burſt upon your head? is 't poſſible
You ſhould not know how dear a reckoning, what
A bloody one perhaps, you have to pay?
For what, you beſt ſhould gueſs.—Infatuate man!
Away!—There is no ſafety here!—Fly quickly!—
There is no ground where Naples has command
Can ſhelter you!—You're mad to ſtay one moment!—
The blood-hounds of the ſtate are at your heels!—
Away, and hide yourſelf betimes!

CLAUDIO.

Ha! ha!

STRENI,

STRENI.

You laugh!—(He's ſurely mad!)

CLAUDIO.

Indeed I do,
To ſee the bottom of this fearful myſtery.
'Tis well no wounded conſcience watches here
To cry out Guilty when another's crimes
Burſt out. There's here a ſmall miſtake, my Lord;
Only one CLAUDIO for another; that's all.—
Ha! ha!

STRENI.

What other CLAUDIO?

CLAUDIO.

You have ſeen him.
A diſtant kinſman of my own, and tho'
He has hurt me in the tendereſt point I pity him.
'Twas I that raiſed him to a place of truſt,
Becauſe I thought him honeſt; and, for ſome time,
So blind is friendſhip, I neglected all
Reports to his diſcredit, as the blaſts
Of envy; till at laſt ſome flagrant acts
Appeared.—I never was ſo angry; never
Perhaps but then have I rebuked with rancour.
Yet on his promiſe to offend no more

He

He was continued. But it ſeems th' effect
Of all my friendly warnings, all my threats,
And weak miſtaken lenity at laſt,
Was only this, to put him on his guard,
And make him a more politick knave. But now
He is in hands will ſtrip him of his ſpoils,
And ſqueeze the inmoſt marrow from his bones.
For, if 'tis true what I have heard, by this
He's priſoner to the ſtate.

STRENI.

(What ſhall I think?)—
This is a ſtrange miſtake; and if indeed
It be no more, I'm glad on't for the ſake
Of one I am ſo loath to judge of harſhly.
But on your honour, pardon me good Count,
Is there no more than this?

CLAUDIO.

D'ye doubt my word?—
What ſhould I gain by ſuch a falſhood?—I
Who ſee no luxury in ſimple lying?
Were I th' obnoxious wretch you take me for
My mind had hardly been employed to-day
In nuptial thoughts; nor ſhould my preſence here
Have ſhock'd good STRENI. Look upon my face;

Is

Is there ought there or in my whole behaviour
That ſhews like guilt? Heavens! can I be ſo monſtrous
So madly wicked, ſo abſurd a villain,
For ſuch I muſt be, to involve my friends,
Thoſe whom I love moſt, one whom I adore,
In my perdition?—But if you doubt me ſtill,
With all my heart here let us ſtop, my Lord,
Till every ſtraw ſuſpicion ſtumbles at
Be ſwept away. Inform yourſelf; be cautious;
Do nothing raſhly. And, my Lord, to ſhew you
How dearly I regard your ſatisfaction:
Let us, that you may weigh it at full leiſure,
Adjourn this marriage; not for a month or two,
But for a year or two, or three, or ſeven,—
Or, if you pleaſe, for ever. Heaven forbid
I ſhould engage you in my bankruptcy!—
Good God defend me!—So, farewel, my Lord—
My ſervants there—

STRENI.

Come; not ſo hot, my Count.
A word or two before you go. Let's part
Like friends at leaſt.

CLAUDIO.

Where friendſhip is ſo tickliſh
The ſooner done the better. I'm heart-ſick

Of hot and cold friends: They never quit the pains
I t coſts to manage them. Farewel!

STRENI.

Yet hear me.—

I'm ſorry, CLAUDIO; I am quite confounded
For this miſtake. But the report was aimed
At you ſo very plainly, that your brother
Muſt have believed it. 'Tis not in my nature,
Old as I am, to be ſuſpicious.
But where the welfare of my only child,
Her happineſs for life depends, to ſcruple
Is no offence I hope; at leaſt I'm ſure
meant you none. In proof of which, demand
My utmoſt power to ſerve you.

CLAUDIO.

Ah STRENI! STRENI!
You know me but too well. I am a child
To you; mere wax, you mould me at your pleaſure:
You wound and heal me. Were I leſs your ſlave,
And leſs enamoured, this unkind behaviour
Had rid me of thoſe chains which I prefer
To freedom—love and friendſhip.

STRENI.

Come, forgive
An old man's ſpleen; forget it. And to prove

How

How little apt I am to keep impreſſions
To CLAUDIO's diſadvantage; every art
I have, and all my power, ſhall be employed
To haſten on theſe nuptials.—But is it certain,
This marriage of ALPHONSO? make that appear,
And the main obſtacle's removed.

CLAUDIO.

Laſt night
I met a gentleman, you know him; STURIO;
You have ſeen him with ALPHONSO: he comes on buſineſs
Poſt-haſte from Sicily. The night before
He left Palermo was, he ſays, the eve of
ALPHONSO's wedding, which his haſte alone
Excuſed him from attending. 'Tis like he brings
Some meſſage hither; for he ſaid, this morning
He ſhould be here. I thought to have found him here
Before me; but he'll ſoon appear, I doubt not,
And certify his news.

STRENI.

Well, let him come.
He comes with no intelligence to retard
Our purpoſe.—Shall I leave you, CLAUDIO, here
Till I prepare OLYMPIA for ſuch news
As raſhly told might hurt her?

CLAUDIO.

By all means.

STRENI.

You'll follow preſently?

CLAUDIO.

I will, my Lord.

SCENE IV.

CLAUDIO.

What am I doing? 'Tis almoſt a crime
To work on this good man's credulity thus.
But the great principle which rules us all,
The care that quits us not even in deſpair,
Is love of ſelf.—Self-preſervation never
Can be unjuſt. If this ſucceed, his credit
And intereſt with the ſtate may clear me. Nothing,
Nothing but that can do it. But we muſt
Diſpatch: this crazy fabric of my fortune
Totters at every ſtep of ſtealing time.———
But then to be reproached and baited for
Diſſimulation!—Who can prove that?—None.
Was I obliged to know what ſecret trains
Were laid to blow my envied grandeur up?—

Not I. There's ſomething too in STRENI's carriage
To juſtify a little double dealing.
He has not uſed me quite ingenuouſly;
And far from kindly. Intereſt is his God,
As well as that of other—honeſt men.
So far all's fair, we're on an equal footing.—
Well———
This is the moſt convenient couſin!—CLAUDIO,
I thank you for this ſeaſonable help.
Would I could ſerve you in my turn! But that's
Too late; your doom is certain: mine comes next
To be determined; to my loſs or not
I dare not gueſs.—But flouriſh I or fall,
'Tis ſtill ſome ſatisfaction to have cruſh'd
The eager hopes of this impetuous youth.
Dupe of fair words, and ſmiles, and ſhrugs, ALPHONSO,
You have forgot, I do believe, but I
Shall ſtill remember, with what haughtineſs
You faced me when a younger Officer
O'erſtrode you once. Was I to blame? He knew
The art of ſpeaking to the palm; and was
A docile boy, as ſtupid as you pleaſe,
And not too apt to rouſe much jealouſy.
Theſe are the men beſt fitted for promotion
In every rank of life.—But now to OLYMPIA.

Now help me Flattery!—Flattery! She deſerves
All praiſe; ſuch excellence could not find its match in
The men of this age: yet ſhe muſt be mine;
And ſoon, or never. Hence then all delay;
My fate depends on this important day.

ACT III. SCENE I.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Come, couſin, you may breathe here freely; come,
There floats no fulſome incenſe here. You need
Freſh air; a tempeſt were almoſt too little
To fan this muſky cloud of flattery off.
Foh! Such a ſtench of perfume ſuffocates worſe
Than a volcano's mouth. Heaven! what a tongue!
I do believe the Devil inſpires him. Bleſs me!
With what a face of plain ſincerity,
With what a ſerious confidence, he throws out
The moſt extravagant flatteries! How they work
On your hard heart I know not: but for me,
I feel ſo tickled with my ſhare, God knows,
I ſhall not ſleep theſe three nights.

OLYMPIA.

Ah VICTORIA!
Was ever one ſo wretched?

VICTORIA.

To be teized thus
Indeed is moſt vexatious. But an hour,

'Tis hardly more, ſince from the middle gloom of
A long tempeſtuous night, a ſudden blaze
Like noon burſt out, almoſt with ſhocking brightneſs.
It ſmiled a while, enchantingly it ſmiled,
And promiſed balmy climes and happy ſhores:
Then, like a dream of th' air, this gaudy meteor,
This phantom of a ſun, diſſolved itſelf
Into the waſte of darkneſs.

OLYMPIA.

Ah me! VICTORIA!
What ſhall I do?

VICTORIA.

Be firm, and never yield.
You're in the right, and cannot be too obſtinate.
Be conſtant ſtill; a little ſtruggling more
Will end this ſtrife.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas! all's over.

VICTORIA.

All's over! How my dear? I ſay keep firm.
Why this deſpondence? recollect yourſelf.
Have you, good Heaven! forgot your father's promiſe,
So lately made? his unexpected promiſe,
So voluntarily made? Inſiſt on that.

Never

Never forſake yourſelf, my dear OLYMPIA.
Abide inflexibly by that.

OLYMPIA.

Alas!
You come not near my grief.

VICTORIA.

I gueſs it. But
There's ſomething yet more ſhocking than the loſs of
A faithleſs lover. What you may avoid;
And will I hope.

OLYMPIA.

Sure you have never loved.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA, would you have me whine?
And with an ill-timed ſympathy indulge
A mind already too much ſoftened, when
Th' occaſion calls for fortitude and ſpirit?
One effort more — fear nothing — the ſteady mind
O'er-matches fate itſelf.—

OLYMPIA.

My fate approaches.
Ah my VICTORIA!—You heard the news?

VICTORIA.

I did,

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Do you believe it? May it not be falſe ſtill?
Tell me ſincerely what you think.

VICTORIA.

'Tis hard
To judge; a little time will ſhew it.

OLYMPIA.

But
May it not poſſibly enough be falſe?
It comes from a ſuſpicious hand. A falſehood
Believ'd for e'er ſo ſhort a time may ſpeed
A wicked purpoſe; and this art they ſay
The cunning often practiſe.—Beſides, this meſſenger
Appears not yet; 'tis noon too.—Ah VICTORIA!
Is there not room to hope ſtill?

VICTORIA.

Dear OLYMPIA!
I would ſuppoſe the worſt in doubtful caſes,
For better mortify a little needleſly,
Than meet misfortune unprepared.

OLYMPIA.

Alas!
I am my own impoſtor. Strange, that miſery
Should

Should flatter thus itſelf! Why dare I not
Reſolve at once to look upon my fate?

A SERVANT.

Madam, a Gentleman, one Signor STURIO,
Begs at your leiſure to attend you.

OLYMPIA.

STURIO!—
Well ſhew him in—STURIO you ſaid? Good Heaven!
What ſhall I do, VICTORIA!—Stay—I'm buſy.
Excuſe me to him.—Tell him—by and by
I ſhall be glad to ſee him. When I ring
You may conduct him hither.
Ah VICTORIA! [*Sitting down haſtily.*]
What ſhall I do?
I cannot ſee this man: [*Riſing.*]
This beating at the heart makes it impoſſible—
I pant for breath—I ſhall not have the power
To ſpeak one word.—Ah me!

VICTORIA.

Deareſt OLYMPIA!
Yield not to this alarm. Recover yourſelf.
This flutter cannot laſt.

OLYMPIA.

Muſt I be ſeen
In this confuſion? It muſt not be—I will not.

It is not fit I ſhould.—Pray might not you
Receive this viſit for me? Do, dear couſin.
Say I am ſick, or whimſical, or mad;
Say any thing, and let me hide myſelf.

VICTORIA.

Stay, dear OLYMPIA. Come: it cannot be.
You cannot now with honour to yourſelf
Avoid this interview. Come, come, be firm.
'Twill ſoon be over. Were the caſe my own,
I think I ſhould with moſt contemptuous coolneſs
Receive the laſt leave of a faithleſs man.
What ſhould you fear who know the worſt already?
Let indignation ſhake this tim'rous fit off;
And ſhew yourſelf ſuperior to the loſs
Of one not worth the keeping. Come, you can;
I know, I'm ſure, you can.

OLYMPIA.

I am aſhamed
Of this baſe weakneſs.—Well, what muſt be muſt be.
[*Rings.*]
Now, Heaven ſupport me!

VICTORIA.

Never fear. The fit
Goes off: and what alarms you now, my deareſt,
You will hereafter laugh at.—Shall I leave you?

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

No, ſtay.——He comes.——Ah!

VICTORIA.

Let him. He's more afraid
Than you.

SCENE II.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA, STURIO.

STURIO.

All happineſs to Lady OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

You're welcome, Sir, from Sicily.—Pray ſit, Sir.
I'm glad to ſee you; you're a mighty ſtranger.
We have not ſeen you I'm ſure almoſt theſe two years.
How like you Sicily, Sir? They ſay it is
A moſt enchanting ſpot.

STURIO.

A Paradiſe, Madam.

OLYMPIA.

They ſay ſo. Pray what news there, Sir? I hope
You left all friends well, and—amongſt the reſt
How does your friend ALPHONSO?

STURIO.

STURIO.

Madam, I left him well.

OLYMPIA.

We're told h has altered his condition lately.—
He's married?—Is he not?—This Lady, Sir,
My friend, may know whate'er belongs to me.
He's married?—

STURIO.

Madam———

OLYMPIA.

Well, I wiſh him joy
With all my heart. I hope 'tis happily.
The Lady—you have ſeen her?

STURIO.

Often, Madam.
CASERTA's daughter: not a firſt-rate beauty,
Nor yet quite homely.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I wiſh them happy
With all my ſoul.—No other news, Sir?

STURIO.

None. But
This letter, Madam, parting from ALPHONSO,
I pro-

I promiſed to deliver.——Pardon me
Th' abruptneſs of this hurry; buſineſs calls me:
And what more time I have to ſpare at preſent
Lord STRENI claims. Madam, may all that's good
Ever attend you.

OLYMPIA.

I thank you, Sir. Farewell.—

SCENE III.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! ah! VICTORIA! [*Throwing herſelf into a chair.*]

VICTORIA.

Dear OLYMPIA, patience!——
What ſhall I do?—When I ſhould comfort her
I weep myſelf.—My dear OLYMPIA!—

OLYMPIA.

Ah me!

VICTORIA.

This deſperate grief will kill her.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! Oh! Oh!

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA, let us not indulge
This weakneſs of our ſpirit.—Come, my deareſt,
Come rouſe yourſelf.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas! VICTORIA!—
Do not deſpiſe me.

VICTORIA.

Nay, my dear, this weakneſs
Has nothing ſhameful in it. As it ſhews
A delicate mind, it is a beauty rather;
And only grows a fault and a misfortune
By too much yielding to it.

OLYMPIA.

Ah VICTORIA!—
I am ſo humbled with repeated ſhocks
That my tame ſpirit ſinks beneath its wrongs.—
But for this letter—I am blind with weeping—
Read it, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Burn it.

OLYMPIA.

Read it firſt.

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

" Madam, in ſpite of all your neglects I have prevailed " upon myſelf to write to you once more, that you " may know I have temper enough to forgive them. " I am not ſo ſelfiſh as to diſapprove of your choice; " it is perfectly prudent; for wealth you know " is the great ſupport of female pride: vanity I ſhould " ſay, for pride is too noble a name for it. I wiſh you " joy of your Count; there is one noble quality at- " tends him—he is rich. But if he ever dares appear " where I am, were he twenty times your huſband, I " ſhall take the liberty to put him in mind of ſome " other qualities I have diſcovered in him. In the mean " time I am ſo far from reproaching you with incon- " ſtancy, that I thank you for having ſhewn it before " it could eſſentially hurt me. I am following your " example, and ſhall forget all former attachments as " faſt as I can. It is what I owe in juſtice to myſelf, " and to one of your ſex who deſerves all my love and " eſteem. Farewell, OLYMPIA! You are not what I " thought you once. But may Heaven rain gold upon " you! So prays the forgiving, tho' monſtrouſly " abuſed ALPHONSO."

OLYMPIA.

What does he ſay? [*Snatching the letter.*]

VICTORIA.

Couſin, I give you joy
Of this deliverance from one worthleſs man.

OLYMPIA.

What does he ſay?—*All my neglects*—that's well.
He has *prevailed upon himſelf*—'Tis much
So great a ſpirit ſhould condeſcend ſo far
As to abuſe me!—*I have temper enough*—
Yes temper! ſurely—*To forgive you*, that's pleaſant—
'Tis pity you ſhould have reaſon to forgive me.
Your choice is perfectly prudent—Fool! what choice?
The only choice I ever made was a wrong one,
And I'm aſhamed of 't—thank Heaven I've miſſed it!—
Choice!—
What's this he talks
Of wealth—of female pride, and vanity?—
Such rambling ſtuff!—he's mad! the man's diſtracted!
You *wiſh me joy*. Heaven mend your crazy head!
Did you ever hear the like?

VICTORIA.

'Tis an original.

OLYMPIA.

But if he ever dares appear, &c.
How well he counterfeits anger, and plays the bully!—

But here's a ſtroke worth all the reſt—*I am ſo far*
From reproaching you with inconſtancy, &c.
—Before it could eſſentially hurt me—
What does he mean? There is no bearing this!
Baſe foul-mouthed perjured traitor, have you the face
Thus to abuſe me, whoſe only fault to you
Was too much conſtancy? I'm well repaid
For all the griefs my fooliſh conſtancy
Has coſt me!—Am I not, VICTORIA?

VICTORIA.

Curſe him!
He is not worth your anger.

OLYMPIA.

I am following your example—
Good again!—*and ſhall forget*—forget
Me! by all means do. *In juſtice to one*
Of your ſex who deſerves all my love and
Eſteem———
That ſhe may do without deſerving much.—
You are not what I thought you once—
No more are you—May Heaven
Rain all its plagues upon me, if you dwell
A moment longer here—Thus, thus I tear
The villain from my heart. 'Tis done at once.—
There, there—thou art no more. [*Tearing the letter.*]

VICTORIA.

Who talks of want
Of ſpirit? How this haughtineſs becomes thee!
This indignation's charming.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I'm cured
Of one great folly. How light my heart feels from
A villainous gueſt that ſat like lead upon it!
My ſpirit mounts again. Believe me, couſin,
I'm glad of this man's baſeneſs; I enjoy it:
There's luxury in it. I do not entertain
A wiſh ſo tame as that he had proved unalterable.
'Tis better as it is. It feeds my ſpite
Voluptuouſly to find him ſuch a villain.
I wiſh he knew how heartily I ſcorn him!
How thoroughly I deteſt him!—He ſhall know it.
I'll make him feel it.—

VICTORIA.

Your abſolute neglect,
As if ſuch things had never paſt, will gall him.
'Twill be the fineſt vengeance! Cool neglect,
If there is pride in him, will humble him more
Than fifty thouſand ſpiteful offices.

OLYMPIA.

Oh! that mean letter! I could tear myſelf.
I wiſh the palſy had ſeized this hand before
It did me ſuch diſgrace.

VICTORIA.

My dear OLYMPIA,
Ne'er let that hurt you. You did but what was honourable.
Were it to do again you ſhould.—It leaves
His baſeneſs no excuſe.

OLYMPIA.

Pray, when this meſſage came,
How did I look, VICTORIA? tell me plainly.
Did I ſeem violently ſhocked?

VICTORIA.

By no means.

OLYMPIA.

Look'd I not fluſh'd and pale by turns? No ſigns
Of wildneſs or diſorder?

VICTORIA.

None that he could perceive.

OLYMPIA.

Did I not faulter in my ſpeech a little?

VICTORIA.

Not more than I do now.

OLYMPIA.

Nor tremble?

VICTORIA.

No.

Thou didſt behave with ſo compoſed a grace,
I could have hugg'd thee.

OLYMPIA.

Well, I'm glad of this,
And now, VICTORIA, I ſhall ſhew this falſe one
How ſlightly I regard him. I have the means
To ſhew him inſtantly 'twas honour, more
Than ill-directed love, that made me ſtand
So long and cloſe a ſiege; made me hold out
To diſobedience, almoſt to rebellion,
Againſt my father's threats, his warm intreaties,
Againſt his wiſer choice. My honour now
Abſolved, I cannot be too paſſive to
My filial duty.

VICTORIA.

What doſt thou mean, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA,

To mortify a villain's inſolence.

VICTORIA,

VICTORIA.

But how?

OLYMPIA.

By giving my rejected vows to
The man he hates; whom for his ſake I ſcorned;
Whom now I love becauſe I know he hates him.
Yes, I will give his mortal foe my hand.—
By heaven, I will!

OLYMPIA.

You will! indeed not you.

OLYMPIA.

Then, if I do not, may the———

SCENE IV.

OLYMPIA, VICTORIA, STRENI.

STRENI.

Well, OLYMPIA.
You cannot doubt it now? The truth appears
At laſt. You ſee, what happens every day,
The fickleneſs of youthful vows: deſpiſe it;
The dignity of your ſex demands it of you.
Laugh at it.

OLYMPIA.

Nay, my Lord, I have forgot it.
There is but one reflection ſtings me now.
I have, againſt my nature, ſtubbornly
Oppoſed my father's will, his juſt command.
Moſt heartily I repent it; and I hope
Your goodneſs will forgive a crime which honour
Betrayed me to. My honour diſengaged,
I have no will but yours.

STRENI.

There ſpoke my daughter!
My will, my pleaſure is to ſee you happy.
'Tis that engroſſes all my cares; for that
Have I ſo ſteadily withſtood your tears,
And made the weakneſs of affection yield
To rigid reaſon. Now th' auſpicious hour
Appears; and not to dally needleſly
With time, what muſt be done to-morrow may
As well be done to-day. Nay were it only
For triumph's ſake, to make as light of love
As the moſt fickle boy, the ſooner the better,
This very day —

OLYMPIA.

This moment!

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Hold, OLYMPIA!

STRENI.

Hold you, VICTORIA!

VICTORIA.

No: I will not hold.
Shall I, my Lord, when hurried by deſpair
My friend would plunge into the boiling deep,
Look calmly on, and cry Well done; 'tis right;
This world is not for you; deſtroy yourſelf;
And do it bravely, as becomes your ſpirit?—
But this is worſe. Death ends all human woes:
But this is launching a weak ſlender bark
Into a ſea of ſorrows.

STRENI.

Pray, good madam,
None of your rhetoric.

VICTORIA.

I affect not rhetoric.
'Tis truth.

STRENI.

'Tis falſe,

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

My Lord, I ſhould be grieved
To ſee the trial hazarded.—OLYMPIA!—
You're going in a ſudden fit of ſpleen
To throw yourſelf away. ALPHONSO has done it.
But diſagreeable ties ſit not ſo heavy
On his as on our ſex. Yet he's unhappy:
Self-ruined, blindly hurried to his fate.
For he has married from mere pique, I'm poſitive;
And loves you ſtill. That angry letter ſhews it.

OLYMPIA.

Love me! Ne'er name him more: it ſhocks me.

VICTORIA.

Couſin,
Is't poſſible a little paſſing guſt
Of ſpleen ſhould drive you to devote your life
To eternal diſcontent? To wed the man
You cannot love—whom you deſpiſe?—Good Heaven!
The moment that you cool you'll give the world
To have the deed undone.

STRENI.

This is intolerable!
VICTORIA, you're too buſy, much too buſy.

Meddle

Meddle not here, I charge you. Mind your own Affairs.

VICTORIA.

My friend's are mine. Pray, good my Lord,
What intereſt of my own have I to meddle?
'Tis neither vanity nor love of brawls,
I'm ſure, that makes me buſy. But is this
A time for tame implicit complaiſance?
Can I ſit ſtill, and ſilently approve
When thoſe I love are bent on deſperate deeds?
Call me officious and impertinent,
As many meddlers as you chuſe, I care not,
For be as angry as you pleaſe, at leaſt
I will diſcharge my mind.

STRENI.

You're mad, you're mad.—
You're mad, I tell you.

VICTORIA.

'T may be.—But dear OLYMPIA,
Why will you hurry on a change, at beſt
So awful; here moſt certainly ſo fatal?

OLYMPIA.

It is my father's will,

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Your father is
Too good to exact obedience here, againſt
Your inclination. 'Tis not very long ſince
He told you ſo.

STRENI.

Good God! what muſt I bear?
Is this exaction? Bleſs me! is it not
Her own free choice?—Pray, is it not, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

Alas! my father!—

STRENI.

What wouldſt thou ſay?

OLYMPIA.

Forgive
My wavering mind. I want not to retract
My haſty promiſe. Only give me time,
A little time, till old impreſſions die;
That I may yield a more devoted heart,
A heart more worthy of a good man's vows.

STRENI.

Heaven's curſe on all romance! You've learnt, OLYMPIA,
A delicacy foreign to this world.

You

You will, in ſpite of plain good ſenſe, refine
Yourſelf into a fool. How many matches,
And happy matches too, had ne'er been made
Were all your ſex as ſcrupulous as you are.
But you're ſo fickle, now you ſay this moment,
And now next year.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! it was my raſhneſs.
I hope my father will not urge againſt me
What paſſion tortured from me.

STRENI.

Who can bear this?
By Heaven I ſhall run mad!—To have a daughter
So obſtinate againſt her father's will!
Againſt her own good fortune!—Gracious Heaven!
Why did you curſe me with a ſtubborn child?
I have but one, and ſhe's———

VICTORIA.

Dear good my Lord,
Why all this heat? OLYMPIA knows her duty;
And only begs a little time—

STRENI.

To ſhuffle.
I'll have no more of that. I have too long

Indulg'd

Indulg'd her ſqueamiſh humour: but I will not
Be longer trifled with in this, depend on't.
And if ſhe is my daughter; if I live,
This day ſhall make her, what ſhe ought to wiſh,
Count CLAUDIO's wife: this very hour ſhall do it.
By Heaven it ſhall.

VICTORIA.

But why to-day, my Lord?
Why ſhould it be ſo ſudden?

STRENI.

'Tis my pleaſure,
I'll have it ſo. Let me alone; I know ſure
What I am doing.

VICTORIA.

Yet hear me, good my Lord—

STRENI.

No more! I would not have you waſte your breath.
'Tis fix'd; and may I never taſte of bliſs
If ought ſhall ſhake me.

VICTORIA.

O Heaven!—

OLYMPIA.

Couſin, forbear.—
Pardon it father to my perverſe fate
That

That I've e'er combated your ſacred will.
'Tis but in this I e'er could heſitate
At one command of yours. You are determined;
And were it to my ruin, I obey.
I've nothing more to plead.

STRENI.

My deareſt child,
Not to thy ruin; Heaven forbid! I lead thee
To honour, happineſs, eſtabliſh'd bliſs.
Thou ſoon ſhalt be the envy of thy ſex,
And I the happieſt father Heaven e'er ſmiled on.
Come; let us go, and ſeize the proſperous hour;
No dallying now, while fortune's in our power.

VICTORIA.

Alas! alas! what fortune I foreſee
In this, is black, and ends in miſery.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ALPHONSO.

Married! Then what a wretch art thou, ALPHONSO?
Juſt married!—Fates, I am your daily ſport.
Born to be wretched, all my life has been
A train of ſtrange miſchances. Married! and to
My moſt deteſted foe!—Death! muſt this be?
It ſhall not, were all hell in arms to guard
This imp of treachery. My quick revenge
Shall burſt this fiend-tied moſt unnatural knot,
And make all villains quake—

A SERVANT.

My Lady, Sir,
The Counteſs will attend you.

ALPHONSO.

'Tis well. I thank you.—
The Counteſs! Vengeance! Oh I ſhall run mad!—
My fluttering heart! She comes! I caught a glimpſe
That charms and tortures me.

SCENE II.

ALPHONSO, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Who's this? defend me!
What are you?

ALPHONSO.

Need I tell my name, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

I have no buſineſs with your name nor you.
What brought me hither?—

ALPHONSO.

Stay, OLYMPIA, hear me.—

OLYMPIA.

I'm not at leiſure.—

ALPHONSO.

But, we part not ſo.
I will be heard.

OLYMPIA.

Preſumptuous! are you mad?
Let go my hand.

ALPHONSO.

'Twas mine—till fate and you—

OLYMPIA.

Yours!—Never!—'Twas not fate but I that gave it,
And my heart with it, to a man ten times
Your worth. It was my voluntary deed.
I gave it to———

ALPHONSO.

A villain.

OLYMPIA.

Tell him ſo.

ALPHONSO.

I will; ne'er doubt it: what ſhould hinder me?

OLYMPIA.

You will? I like your manners, to abuſe
My huſband to my face.

ALPHONSO.

Your huſband! plagues!
A knave that ſhould be married to the wheel.—
And you to call him huſband!

OLYMPIA.

I'm not uſed
T' exchange high ſpeeches with the mad. Go, leave me,

And

And keep your head cool.—Good God! I cannot think
What brought you here. How! leave your bride ſo ſoon!—
I've had a lucky miſs.

ALPHONSO.

Alas, OLYMPIA!
How you miſtake!

OLYMPIA.

In what?

ALPHONSO.

Both you and I
Are monſtrouſly abuſed; the meereſt dupes
That artful villainy and capricious fate
Ever combined to laugh at.

OLYMPIA.

How?

ALPHONSO.

Good God!
Can you imagine, were I ſo engaged
As you conceive, I ſhould ſo far depart
From all propriety as this day to ſtun you
With impertinent complaints?

OLYMPIA.

O Heaven! what mean you?

ALPHONSO.

While you remain thus ignorant of the truth,
My conſcious honour ſo forſakes me, that
I deem myſelf the traitor you ſuppoſe me.
But know, OLYMPIA———

OLYMPIA.

What?

ALPHONSO.

There never was
A heart more true to tenderneſs than mine.
'Twas your's, 'tis your's; you reign unrivaled there;
You ever did, and ever ſhall: I ſcorn
All other vows.

OLYMPIA.

Bleſs me! you rave indeed.
This is ſtrange talk for a new-married man!

ALPHONSO.

You will not underſtand me, dear OLYMPIA—
I am not married.

OLYMPIA.

Horrors! Did I hear you?—
Not married!

ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

No.

OLYMPIA.

Not married!

ALPHONSO.

No, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Not married!—Oh ſuch monſtrous villainy!—
I'm dizzy—hold me—ah!—

ALPHONSO.

Alas! alas!
What ſhall I do? Dear dear OLYMPIA!—ah me!
I fear ſhe's dead. A ſad and mortal paleneſs
O'erſpreads her lovely face—Theſe hands are cold
And damp as clay—She does not breathe—O God,
She's gone for ever—Dead, dead, dead, OLYMPIA!
O horrible hour!—I follow thee,—yes, thou
Shalt be my angel to conduct my flight
From this baſe world.—She ſtirs—the deadly hue
Shifts from her cheek—ſhe breathes—ſhe ſighs—
OLYMPIA!

OLYMPIA.

Where am I?—Ah—

ALPHONSO.

Lift theſe ſweet eyes again.

OLYMPIA.

Alas, this is no dream! I am awake.
It is ALPHONSO!—will no ſhock deſtroy me?
Ah! when ſhall I be dead?

OLYMPIA.

Talk not of dying.—
OLYMPIA, when you do, this world to me
Becomes a waſte: 'tis little better now.

OLYMPIA.

What blows of fate the wretched may ſurvive!
The worſt I had to fear is come upon me;
And yet I live!—But—

ALPHONSO.

Something in that look
Made beauty dreadful.

OLYMPIA,

Oh, my fatal raſhneſs!
Alas, ALPHONSO!—yet what could I do?
Provoked by falſe intelligence—how falſe
Is yet a myſtery: STURIO, an honeſt man,
Your friend, produced it. Was there room to doubt

Of

Of his integrity? your well-known hand
Confirmed it.—God of Heaven! I muſt ſuppoſe
Your friend corrupted, and that letter forged.
What elſe?—I tore it haſtily; yet ſtill
It was ſo perfectly your hand, O villainy!
Ingenious villainy! 'twould have amazed you.

ALPHONSO.

Alas! this myſtery is ſoon unravelled.
Forgive th' intemperance of a frantic fit:
'Twas mine, OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

This is ſtranger ſtill.
Quite inconceiveable!

ALPHONSO.

I'll tell you all:
And when I've done judge if I was to blame.
My father, as you know, when all his arts
And intereſt fail'd to mitigate the King,
Would needs himſelf accompany my exile.
So much he ſtomached the diſgrace, he ſwore
The burning vault ſhould ſwallow Naples ere
He touched its ſhore again. Beſides, he felt
Too much his friend Lord STRENI's altering mind.
He dwelt on that; it ſtung him keenly: me

It only mortified. He ſtrove in vain
To rouſe me to reſentment. Inwardly
He burnt for ſome fair opportunity,
That I might be the firſt to cancel vows
Which STRENI ſeemed not forward to confirm.
The opportunity he wiſhed for came
As fate had winged it, For I had not long
Pin'd at Palermo, when a friendſhip grew
Between my father and the Count CASERTA;
Who from ſome diſcontent had long before
Retired from Naples thither, and ſtill loved
By ſympathy whoever hated Naples.
This noble Count, proud of his ancient blood,
Had two young daughters. The eldeſt JULIA,
Some time had lived confined for an attempt
To ſteal a marriage with a youth whoſe family,
Tho' not obſcure, he thought no match for his.
Now grown impatient of his jealous cares,
It pleaſed him in my favour to let ſlip
Some diſtant hints, which with a ranc'rous joy
My father ſnatched; he preſſed me eagerly
To ſeize th' occaſion: as inflexibly
I waved th' unwelcome offer. Till at laſt
There went a rumour made my blood run cold,
That my falſe rival's ſuit was daily proſpering.

When

When I look back, 'twas his own crafty lie,
For I can trace it to his emiſſaries;
Tho', blinded then and giddy with deſpair
And jealouſy, too eaſily I was wrought on
To give it credit. What confirmed it too
Was that to all my frequent letters, one
Reply had ne'er been made.

OLYMPIA.

Oh Heaven!—not one
Of all thoſe letters ever came to chear
My deſolate mind. I gueſs'd the cauſe, it ſeems,
Too truly.—But proceed.

ALPHONSO.

Long urg'd and teiz'd
In vain, at laſt provoked I made my ſuit;
Which, from a coy reception, by degrees
Was kindly entertained: but ſtill it made
A ling'ring progreſs, which I more rejoiced
Than grieved at. For, tho' JULIA was compleat
In all th' engaging ways that could be wiſhed
In a companion; and, tho' ſcarce a beauty,
Had perſonal charms ſufficient to ſurprize
A vacant breaſt; yet, ah OLYMPIA! mine
Still with vain efforts ſtruggled to ſhake off

Its firſt lov'd conqueror's ſway; and ſtill I hoped:
Till with ſuch plauſible conſiſtent ſtrokes
Your marriage was reported, that ſelf-flattery
No longer could amuſe me. By this our fathers,
Tired with a dallied courtſhip, hurryingly
Urged on the treaty, and the day was fix'd.
'Twas now juſt not arrived, when late at night
Your letter came. Never was mortal breaſt
So tortured with conflicting powers; with joy,
With anxious hopes and fluttering fears, ſhame, honour.
Not for all Sicily would I again
Endure that reſtleſs night's perplexity.
Tho' 'twas determined in my mind, howe'er
The world might clamour, that all other intereſts,
All other decencies and duties, ſhould
Yield to my firſt engagement. The morning came
On which I had to deal with difficulties
That no addreſs, without ſome miracle,
Seemed equal to encounter. When, behold—
JULIA was fled!—Good God! my lighten'd ſoul
Grew mad with joy.—I took a haſty leave,
And hied me hither.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! you came, ALPHONSO,
But juſt too late. But Heaven would have it ſo.—
I'm doom'd to wretchedneſs!

ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

Alas, OLYMPIA!
Think on my misery!

OLYMPIA.

We both are ruined
By those who loved us, and have been too busy
To make us happy.

ALPHONSO.

Is there no resource?
No means to burst thro' all these rotten ties,
The work of treachery? Sure there are, OLYMPIA!
Heaven does not hear involuntary vows,
Vows cunningly surprized, or made in anger.
Shall the heart's vows, the ties of mutual love,
Old plighted faith, and sympathy of souls,
Yield to a mere cold formal obligation?
It must not be. I claim the elder right:
You were by all consents devoted mine,
Before this selfish insincere profane
Intruder ever saw you. Dear OLYMPIA,
Let us oppose fair arts to impious fraud.
I have the means at hand to snatch you from
This fatal place, to where the purest vows
May soon before the holy shrine dispel
The sorcery of those sacrilegious rites;

And

And to its lawful owner render back
Th' inviolated prize.

OLYMPIA.

Alas! alas!
ALPHONSO, this is raving.

ALPHONSO.

Where's the difficulty?
The night comes on to favour this exploit.
Let us not curſe our timid hearts hereafter
Becauſe for fear of little ſqualls we loſt
The tide of fortune.—Ah pity me, OLYMPIA!
To live without you is deſpair and frenzy.
I will not live upon ſuch terms.

OLYMPIA.

Alas!
What you propoſe is neither fit nor practicable.
We needs muſt part,—yes, we muſt part for ever,
Farewell, ALPHONSO?—Leave me to my fate;
No matter what it be. Farewell, farewell—
And when you think of me drop a ſad tear,
And ſay there was a maid that lov'd me more
Than her own life. My kindeſt wiſhes ſtill
Attend you with a warmth no time can cool;
And my laſt breath ſhall bleſs you. Again farewell.

ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

We muſt not part.

OLYMPIA.

We muſt, we muſt. Farewell.—
I heard a foot; it comes this way.—If e'er
You loved me, leave this place without delay.
Stay not a moment longer.—Ah ALPHONSO!—
Farewell for ever!—

ALPHONSO.

Stay, OLYMPIA: ſtay!—
She's gone! O Heaven!

SCENE III.

ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Good God! it is ALPHONSO!—
This is aſtoniſhing!—My dear dear friend,
This unexpected pleaſure quite tranſports me.
Thrice welcome, dear ALPHONSO!

ALPHONSO.

Generous CLAUDIO,
I know it, and I thank your courtly words.

Would thoughts were viſible, that it might appear
With what ſincerity we love each other.
But compliments apart, pray are you not
Aſhamed to ſee me?

CLAUDIO.

Why, ALPHONSO?

ALPHONSO.

Nay,
I know how nobly ſome deſpiſe all ſhame.
But are you not afraid to ſee the man
Who feels his wrongs, and will no longer bear 'em?

CLAUDIO.

I never was afraid to meet my foe,
Much leſs to ſee my friend. You have no cauſe
I'm ſure, ALPHONSO, not to be my friend.
Were all the truth known it would ſoon appear
How from my heart I am, and ſtill have been,
My generous brave ALPHONSO's. Hitherto
Indeed my friendly aims have ſtill been croſs'd;
And I have felt it more perhaps than you.
Tho' now thoſe rubs to me ſeem rather fortunate:
For little ſteps, by which each aſs can climb,
Are rather checks to merit, and diſgrace
Generous ambition; which at one bold flight

Should

Should ſeize a ſtation worthy of itſelf.
And now the time draws near, when I ſhall prove
By deeds with what ſincerity I ſtill
Have lov'd ALPHONSO. Something that may ſuit
Aſpiring worth I purpoſe to reſign;
And but retain it till my intereſt has
Secured it yours. Nay were you not my friend,
Of all men living I ſhould wiſh it yours:
Becauſe I love my country as I ought,
And would be honoured in my ſucceſſor.

ALPHONSO.

Fine words! enough to make a gull of one
That did not know you. But they coſt you nothing.—
You talk of friendſhip! and to me, preſumptuous!
You never was a friend, nor ever can be:
I know what ſpurious metal you are made of.
I come not here to dangle or amuſe
The fool of hope with catching ſlippery promiſes.
I ſcorn the paultry ſport.—Yet there's one favour,
The only one that I ſhall ever deign
To aſk or to receive of you.

CLAUDIO.

What's that?

ALPHONSO.

There is a fountain in the grove behind

The gardens, if you'll meet me there alone
Within this half hour, 'twill oblige me.

CLAUDIO.

Ha! ha!
If one could gueſs why, this would ſeem a challenge.
You're pleaſant, dear ALPHONSO. Ha! ha! ha!

ALPHONSO.

You will not laugh it off ſo.

CLAUDIO.

If you're ſerious,
Why ſhould I from the mere contagion of
An angry look, or a few haſty words,
Give up my calm mind to a giddy ſtorm?
Or be with impotent madneſs drawn into
The eddy of my erring friend's conceits?
If when my friend is drunk with cauſeleſs rage
I loſe my ſober temper, I become
The greater lunatic. Hear me, good ALPHONSO!
I can and dare; but yet I ſhould be ſorry
To uſe my ſword without ſome ſolid cauſe.
'T muſt be a ſolid cauſe indeed that ſpurs me
To point it at the honeſt breaſt of one
I've lov'd ſo truly. And, for all your anger,
Believe me (for I know myſelf and you)

Which

Which of us ever falls, the other leads
A life of horror and remorſe no time
Can ever cure. Then ere we fight at leaſt
Let us explain ourſelves. 'Tis chiefly from
Fantaſtic jealouſies, childiſh fits of ſpleen,
Miſtakes on one ſide and falſe pride on th' other,
That honeſt men e'er quarrel.—Pray, ALPHONSO,
In what have I offended?

ALPHONSO.

Holy Heaven!
Who would not think this cheat a ſaint, an oracle?
But there's no devil to a ſmooth-tongued villain.—
In what have you offended?—Hark ye, tell me
Who was it that procured my baniſhment?
Who was it that embargoed ſacred truth,
To give free traffic to pernicious lies?
And by the moſt perfidious arts contriv'd
To ſtep between me and my deareſt right?—
I ſee by your look you're innocent of the matter.
Deny it if you dare, I'll force the lie
Down that falſe throat.

CLAUDIO.

In one not given to wine;
Such frolics muſt proceed from want of ſleep.

Calm theſe wild ſpirits with one night's repoſe,
And then I'll talk with you.

ALPHONSO.

Buffoon, no ſhuffling!
One of us two ſhall ſleep his laſt to-night.—
You'll meet me preſently.

CLAUDIO.

Excuſe me now,
I'm otherways engaged.

ALPHONSO.

You lie.

CLAUDIO.

Beware,
I muſt not hear this.

ALPHONSO.

You lie.

CLAUDIO.

Nay, then—

ALPHONSO.

A ſtab!
Well aimed to miſs. Now have at your falſe heart.

SCENE IV.

ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO, STRENI, *and Servants.*

STRENI.

[their ſwords.—
What's this? what's this? Good Heaven!—beat down
Hold, hold, I charge you.—Part them—Are you mad?—
Pray how began this fray? ALPHONSO, CLAUDIO,
You're both my friends, and I am ſhocked ſo ſee
Such hot-brained work between you. How began this?—
Go you and wait without—Pray who began this?
Come, CLAUDIO, tell me,—was it you?

CLAUDIO.

My Lord,
I ne'er began a quarrel.—Let me breathe firſt—
And then I'll tell you.—

ALPHONSO.

Nay, 'twas I; I own it.—
Who elſe had reaſon to complain? 'Twas I,
Provoked by monſtrous injuries, who gave
Opprobrious truths a vent. But 'twas not I,
Who like a cut-throat, an inſidious coward,

Aimed at my unguarded enemy's heart. I'm ſorry
It ſhould have happened here. I did not mean
To ſcare the peace of this reſpected houſe
With angry deeds.

STRENI.

Young blood is hot, ALPHONSO.
When I was young like you my ſword would ach
At every ſlight offence: where none was meant
I've been too madly brave. But when the fit
Was fairly fought out, it never failed to end
In warmeſt friendſhip. Truſt me we have wept
With generous paſſion, at the ſudden change
From bloody ſtrife to cordial amity.
There is no joy to that which noble foes
At reconcilement feel. Come, come your hands;
Yours CLAUDIO, yours ALPHONSO. Come, embrace;
Be friends for ever.

CLAUDIO.

I have ever been,
And ſtill ſhall be ALPHONSO's.

ALPHONSO.

As ſincerely
Shall I be CLAUDIO's.—But you'll meet me?

CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Yes.

ALPHONSO.

Directly.

CLAUDIO.

Doubt not.

ALPHONSO.

Till then—farewell.—Good night.
My Lord, I muſt away. If you have ought
To do at Naples, I'm your poſt; for there
I muſt be ere I ſleep.

STRENI.

Good night, ALPHONSO.
I'm ſorry for this haſte: next time we meet
I hope to taſte your company at more leiſure.

SCENE V.

STRENI, CLAUDIO.

STRENI.

How does my Count? You are not hurt I hope?

CLAUDIO.

Not hurt, my Lord, but truly much amazed.
I did not dream to meet ALPHONSO here;
Still leſs that we ſhould quarrel.

STRENI.

'Tis no wonder,

CLAUDIO.

Not, that he ſhould, before his wedding day
Could well be over, traverſe land and ſea
In ſearch of quarrels?

STRENI.

There's your miſtake, my friend.—
That marriage came to nothing.

CLAUDIO.

Is it poſſible?

STRENI.

'Tis true,

CLAUDIO.

Nay, then no wonder he ſhould ſeek
To pierce my heart thro'. But how could this happen?

STRENI.

I've learnt it but juſt now. 'Tis ſo. Within
I'll tell you how.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

CLAUDIO, *an Officer.*

OFFICER.

My Lord, my Lord, Lord CLAUDIO!

CLAUDIO.

Ha! who is this?—my watchful friend? what news?
There's horror in thy look.

OFFICER.

Fly, fly, my Lord.
This inſtant fly. They'll preſently be here.
Your life is ſold. Fly, fly.

CLAUDIO.

My life?

OFFICER.

Your kinſman
Has bought his own with yours.

CLAUDIO.

I thank him. Come;
Thy hand, I owe thee much; and if I live
Thou'rt made for ever.

OFFICER.

Ah! my good Lord. But fly.
Loſe not a moment. Could I but contrive
To miſdirect their ſearch.—I'll try.

CLAUDIO.

Farewell.
Succeſs attend you.

SCENE VII.

CLAUDIO.

What a fool was I
Not to have laid this prating knave aſleep,
This tell-tale coward, when I ſafely might?
But that's too late.—What's next?—I'll meet my foe.—
This challenge happens well. For if he drops,
I fly for that; no other crime ſuppoſed
To ſtartle me. 'Tis ſomething, plauſibly
To ſhun the fire-edge of a nation's vengeance.
And to gain time gives art and fortune room
To work ſuch happy wonders, that deſpair
Should never ſeize the wiſe.—But ſhould I fall
By this impetuous boy.—Yet better ſo
Than give the curious mob a holiday
To ſee my head jump off.—But then he comes

A con-

A conqueror to poſſeſs my bridal bed;
And meet with mutual ardour virgin charms
That fruitleſly were mine.—That's worſe than death!
It muſt not be. Againſt a deadly foe
All arts are juſtified. Thou dy'ſt, ALPHONSO.
Prepare to meet a ſterner bride. I come:
Pleaſe Heaven thou ſhalt not triumph in my doom.

ACT V. SCENE I.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

STRENI.

'Tis but a qualm, a fit o' th' ſpleen, that's all.
'Twill ſoon blow over.

VICTORIA.

Conſider it not ſo ſlightly,
My Lord: ſhe's dreadfully ill; ſo much unhinged
The down that hardly lights might turn the ſcale
And ſink her paſt recovery.—O 'twas frightful
To ſee her agonies!

STRENI.

How was ſhe taken?

VICTORIA.

With a countenance ſo changed I hardly knew her,
Sobbing and trembling, ſhockingly pale as from
A mortal wound, ſhe burſt into the room

And

And flounced upon the floor. I flew to raiſe her;
Let me lie ſtill and die, ſhe ſaid: half raiſed
Flat on her face ſhe ruſh'd again, and lay
Like one abandoned to deſpair. Aſtoniſh'd
What this ſhould mean, I learnt at laſt a tale
Enough to make her mad indeed.—You know it,

STRENI.

It happened ill; 'twas pity. But what next?

VICTORIA.

After the ſad recital, long ſhe ſat
Penſive, and loſt in thought; one might as well
Have talk'd to a ſtatue; at laſt ſhe ſtarted up
And walk'd about and muttered frantickly.
Muſic, her favourite ſtudy and delight,
I hoped might calm her; but no ſooner ruſhed
The harmony on her ears than down ſhe ſunk
Upon a couch, and wept immoderately,
I thought my heart would have broke,—

STRENI.

My poor OLYMPIA!

VICTORIA.

I ſent to ſtop the muſic. After a pauſe
Of ſilent grief, a fit of laughing ſeized her,
So violent, ſo unnatural as it ſeemed,

'Twas

'Twas perfectly ſhocking. It left her quite exhauſted;
And now ſhe ſleeps.

STRENI.

She has had ſuch fits before.
This kind repoſe will cure her. Poor OLYMPIA
Has ever been too ſenſible to grief,
To joy, to all impreſſions; the misfortune
Of delicate ſpirits, which ſhake at every guſt
That blows or hot or cold. Do, my VICTORIA,
Go keep all quiet, and when ſhe wakes ſend hither.
She'll ſoon be well.

VICTORIA.

Would I were ſure of that!

STRENI.

O never doubt it.—Who's there?—How I'm beſet
With teizing cares and fretful circumſtances!

SCENE II.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

STRENI.

No news yet of the Count? not one returned yet
Of thoſe that went to ſearch?

SERVANT,

SERVANT.

Not one, my Lord.

STRENI.

You ſent them different ways?

SERVANT.

My Lord, I did.

STRENI.

I doubt ſome miſadventure. Go, LORENZO,
Speed me the news whate'er they be, and rid me
Of this ſuſpenſe.

SCENE III.

STRENI.

There's miſchief in the wind.
He ſlipt abruptly from me, after ſome
Ambiguous words, which then I did not mark.
They've ſurely met. That reconcilement was
A ſham to blind me. I remember now
At ſhaking hands they whiſper'd ſomething.—Death!
I might have gueſs'd it. But who could have dreamt
He would have been ſo mad? What, in the name
Of all that's blundering, could provoke a man
Of courage ſo well proved, at ſuch a time

To

STRENI.

Sir, he was here, but is gone;
And may all plagues go with him. Sir, he's vaniſhed.
He diſappeared, as fiends do, ſuddenly.
By this he ſhakes all hell with laughing at
Our fruitleſs ſearch.

OFFICER.

My Lord, you cannot mean
To hide him from the ſtate. Th' attempt were vain,
Might turn ſuſpicion into certainty.
Where'er he be, if I may judge, my Lord,
'Twere wiſe he ſhould ſurrender.

STRENI.

Sir, this houſe [*Rings.*]
Is open to you; find him if you can.
Theſe walls ſhall ſcreen no traitor. If he's here
I'm much deceived.

OFFICER.

I doubt not, good my Lord,
Your well known honour. But the ſtate's command
Muſt punctually be followed; and I hope
My Lord will pardon to our preſent office
What rigid form exacts.

STRENI.

You're welcome, Sir.
Who's there?—LORENZO, ſhew theſe Gentlemen
That if there lurks a traitor here, this houſe
Is ſick till it diſgorge him.

OFFICER.

After what
You have declared, my Lord, our ſearch becomes
A fruitleſs office, a mere ceremony;
Which you'll excuſe.

STRENI.

O Sir, moſt heartily.

SCENE VII.

STRENI.

O this infernal traitor! what could move him
T' abuſe me thus!—He thought perhaps to ſcreen
His frauds by my alliance. Subtle fool,
This unaccompliſh'd treaty binds us not.
Or if it did; were he my daughter's huſband,
And ſhe a mother by him, he ſhould find me
No patron of his crimes. Ah poor OLYMPIA!
How I have plagued myſelf and tortured thee,

To match thee thus unworthily!—Death and hell!
What madneſs, what curs'd dæmon, prompted me
T' anticipate the day? Had I not been
Bereft of judgment and all patience this
Diſgrace could ne'er have touched us.—O fool! O ſhame!
To be this felon's tool! Yet who could dream
He ſhould be ſuch a villain? How unſhaken,
He ſtood what conſcious innocence might ſhrink at!
But callous villainy feels no ſhame———

SCENE VIII.

STRENI, *a Servant.*

SERVANT.

My Lord,
I bring diſaſtrous news.

STRENI.

Let thoſe who ne'er
Have felt misfortune ſtart when ſorrow's named.
For me I grow ſo hardened to all ſhocks
I might defy the fates. Then tell thy tale,
Were it as mortal as the cannon's mouth
Diſcharge it on mine ear.

SERVANT.

SERVANT.

My Lord,——ALPHONSO
Is kill'd.

STRENI.

Unfortunate youth!

SERVANT.

The Count is fled,
With fifty horſemen at his heels.

STRENI.

I grieve
For poor ALPHONSO.—Where found you him?

SERVANT.

In the Grove.
Shot thro' the breaſt; juſt dropt; his hand clinch'd on
His half-drawn ſword.

STRENI.

O murderous villain!—Go,
Compoſe the body privately; and let
No whiſper of this ſad event ſteal out
T' alarm too tender ears.—

SCENE IX.

STRENI.

Ah poor OLYMPIA!
How ſhall thy tottering ſenſes bear this ſhock?
Had I not fatally interpoſed thou mightſt
Have been the happieſt—

SCENE X.

STRENI, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

O my Lord! my Lord!—

STRENI.

What now, VICTORIA?

VICTORIA.

Poor OLYMPIA!—

STRENI.

What!

VICTORIA.

O mad! mad! mad! The poor dear creature's mad!

STRENI.

STRENI.

Juſt heaven forbid!

VICTORIA.

Alas! it is too ſure.—
Juſt now from a moſt unquiet ſleep, that ſeem'd
Nature conflicting with deſpair, ſhe ſtarted;
Cried murder! murder! help! ALPHONSO's murder'd!
Then with ſuch wildneſs in her looks and action,
Such frantic vehemence of terror, grief,
And pity, ſhe addreſs'd th' inviſible air;
It chill'd us all with horror.—You'd have thought
ALPHONSO had been kill'd indeed, and that
His ghoſt ſtood there.

STRENI.

Amazement!

VICTORIA.

By and by
She flew to the window; whence, her delicate frame
Is with convulſive violence ſo poſſeſs'd,
'Twas all that three of us could do to hinder
A fatal leap.

STRENI.

Heaven guard my child! [*Going.*]

OLYMPIA, *behind the Scenes.*

Away!

Away! I ſay.—

STRENI.

Huſh!

OLYMPIA.

Hold me not, good fiends!
In God's name vaniſh! Fly, fly, fly!

WOMAN.

Dear Madam!—

SCENE XI.

STRENI, VICTORIA, OLYMPIA, *Women.*

OLYMPIA.

Dear me no dear! I'll not be dear'd. Avaunt,
Ye wheedling witches! I know who taught you that.
Off, I conjure you—Go——Hah! what are theſe!

STRENI.

How does my deareſt child!

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

This looks ſo like
My father, and ſpeaks ſo like him!

STRENI.

I am, I am.
Doſt thou not know me?

OLYMPIA.

Are you not a ghoſt then?
Mere viſible nothing, as ineſſential
As the vain rainbow? With reverence let me touch
Your hand. I ſhall know by that.—O 'tis, 'tis, 'tis
My real father, let me kiſs for ever
This ſacred hand. I'll never part with it more.—
But why d'ye look ſo ſad? There's ſomething troubles you.

STRENI.

Alas, my child!—

OLYMPIA.

O do not weep; that's dreadful.
My heart is ready to break to ſee you thus:
And yet I cannot weep. Oh! Oh!—Come, this way,
Let us go home.

STRENI.

Thou'rt there already.

OLYMPIA.

O fye

That you ſhould talk ſo!—D'ye ſee theſe creatures?

STRENI.

Yes,

Your faithful ſervants,

OLYMPIA.

Witches! witches! witches!
The mermaids of the burning ſea!—Heaven ſnatch us
From theſe enchanted walls!—Th' arch conjurer
Will ſoon be here, and then all's loſt.—

STRENI.

Who's that?

OLYMPIA.

His name is—I forget it, but you may gueſs.—
Do not be angry. My head's confuſed a little:
But I hope I ſaid no harm. I named no body:
Yet I'm afraid you're angry.—O blaſt me not
With your heavy curſes!

STRENI.

Heaven for ever bleſs
My deareſt child!

OLYMPIA,

OLYMPIA.

Indeed you are too kind
To your poor unduteous daughter. Heaven and you
Forgive my crimes! that I may die when I pleaſe.—
O curſe on all miſtakes!

STRENI.

What doſt thou mean?

OLYMPIA.

I'll tell you when the miſts are gone.—I have it.
I chid ALPHONSO cruelly—Heaven forgive me!—
Indeed he was not ſuch a fickle coxcomb
As ſome ſuppoſe.—They told me he was married;
But I know other matters.—Oh! oh! oh!—

STRENI.

Kind Heaven reſtore her precious wits again,
And puniſh me with any other plague
But this!—

OLYMPIA.

D'ye know what I dreamt laſt night?—Oh 'twas
hideous fancy!—

STRENI.

Never mind dreams, my child,

OLYMPIA

OLYMPIA.

The Moon ſpoke to me! 'Twas horrible. Yet that
Was a trifle to what happened afterwards. —
O this head! this head! —
I cannot put it into words; but while
Such dreams are going who would dare to ſleep? —
I have not ſlept this month.

VICTORIA.

Come, dear OLYMPIA,
'Tis late, come go to bed. I'll watch by your ſide,
While ſweet repoſe diſſolves thoſe idle fears.
Let us to bed.

OLYMPIA.

Away! — Are you a witch too!
You league againſt me too? — Couſin of vengeance,
Hark you, I'll never go to bed; I'll die firſt. —
O fye, fye, fye! to what would you betray me!
Go, go, vile ſhocking creature! —

STRENI.

This to VICTORIA,
Your deareſt friend, OLYMPIA?

OLYMPIA.

Yes, my friend!
Such friends as Heaven defend me from! — My friend,

To ſnatch the antidote of all ſorcery from me?
The balm that heals all wounds.—Ah you're a truſty one;
Would I had known you ſooner!

STRENI.

What means this?

VICTORIA.

Mere jealous fancies, ſick imaginations,
Like all the reſt.

OLYMPIA.

Hark ye:—Nay if you weep
I've done. I'm ſuch a tender hearted fool.—
Ah VICTORIA, VICTORIA!—

VICTORIA.

Dear dear OLYMPIA!—

OLYMPIA.

Huſh! What's that? Let me go.
He's coming.

VICTORIA.

Who, my dear!

OLYMPIA.

'Tis CLAUDIO.—Hide me!—

STRENI.

STRENI.

He'll trouble thee no more.—He's gone.

OLYMPIA.

Ah! would
I had never ſeen him! that's my prayer, and if
There's any harm in it—O Heaven!—See there!

STRENI.

Bleſs thee! What's there?

OLYMPIA.

See! See!

STRENI.

See what, my child?

OLYMPIA.

D'ye aſk?

STRENI.

What ſhould I ſee?

OLYMPIA.

A fight to break
A heart of rock, and make the lion whine
Like a whipt ſpaniel.—ALPHONSO pale and bloody!
O miſery, miſery! O moſt lamented youth!
Who did this cruel ſtern remorſeleſs deed

No

No miracle can undo?—Dead, murder'd, butcher'd!
Speak, I conjure you. Dear dreadful viſion, ſay
What ruffian ſhall be torn on the wheel for this?
Oh! 'tis not to be born to ſee you look ſo.—
Speak if thou canſt—He's gone!

STRENI.

Alas! my child,
Thou ſpeak'ſt to the winds.

OLYMPIA.

Good God!—VICTORIA!—

VICTORIA.

'Twas a mere fancy, for ALPHONSO lives;
And lives, I hope, for many happy days
With his OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Inſupportable!
Muſt I be juggled out of my ſenſes thus?
It ſeems I am a child, a fool. Wiſe couſin,
Pray do not laugh at me: do not, I ſay.
And yet it may be wit perhaps to jeſt
With torture and deſpair.

VICTORIA.

Can you ſuſpect me
For ſuch a monſter?

OLYMPIA.

OLYMPIA.

Did you not ſee him plainly?

VICTORIA.

Believe me, no.

OLYMPIA.

That's ſtrange! that's ſtrange, indeed!

STRENI.

How deadly pale,
She's grown!—Thou'rt ſick, my child.

OLYMPIA.

Too well, too well!
Only a little chilline ſs wanders o'er me.—
Hark how my ears ring! Lend me your hand, VICTORIA.

VICTORIA.

Alas! thou ſhudder'ſt ſo thou canſt not ſtand.
Cold ſweats bedew thee; thou'rt ready to faint, dear girl.
Come, lean upon this couch. So.—

OLYMPIA.

As you will.
Do with me what you pleaſe.—Ha! there again!
Now if you do not ſee him you're blind.—Dear father
Behold! ſee there!—I come, I come, ALPHONSO!
Receive me Heaven—and you—

STRENI.

STRENI.

Ah! hold her up!
She falls like one ſhot thro' the brain.

VICTORIA.

Alas!
She's dead! dead! dead!

STRENI.

'Tis but a fit I hope.—
Hold up her head.—Help, help! Oh all the world
To hear her ſpeak again!—Ah me! that face
Is fix'd in death. She's cold, cold—poor OLYMPIA!
I've liv'd too long. She's gone, my faultleſs child
For ever gone—and I her murderer—Oh!

SKETCHES:

OR

ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

By LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, Esq.

THE FIRST VOLUME.

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THE PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Papers chuſes to call them SKETCHES; as the leaſt imperfect amongſt them is to a laboured treatiſe, what the painter's outlines, or his firſt rude draughts, are to a finiſhed picture. This declaration, he hopes, will be accepted by the proper judges of writing, as a ſuf-

ficient apology for any thing, either in thought or expreſſion, that may be found careleſs or incorrect in his ESSAYS. He owns he could have given theſe little looſe fragments much bolder ſtrokes, as well as more delicate touches: but as an author's renown depends at preſent upon the mobility, he dreads the danger of writing too well; and feels the value of his own labour too ſenſibly, to beſtow it where, in all probability, it might only ſerve to depreciate his performance.

SKETCHES.

OF LANGUAGE.

ALMOST every one that can read, pretends to judge of the author's ſtyle, as it is called: but how few are there who really know good language from bad! Even the beſt judges are ſometimes divided in their opinions; for want, it would ſeem, of a common ſtandard by which the merits of different languages, as well as of different writers in the ſame language, might be compared. If I was to reduce my own private idea of the beſt language to a definition; I ſhould call it the ſhorteſt, cleareſt, and eaſieſt way of expreſſing one's thoughts, by the moſt harmonious arrangement of the beſt choſen words, both for meaning and ſound. The beſt language is ſtrong and expreſſive, without ſtiffneſs or affectation; ſhort and conciſe, without being either obſcure or ambiguous; and eaſy and flowing and diſengaged, without one undetermined or ſuperfluous word.

OF GENIUS.

THERE is a ſtandard of right and wrong in the nature of things, of beauty and deformity, both in the natural and moral world. And as different minds happen to be more or leſs exquiſite, the more or leſs ſenſibly do they perceive the various degrees of good and bad, and are the more or leſs ſuſceptible of being charmed with what is right or beautiful, and diſguſted with what is wrong or deformed. It is chiefly this ſenſibility that conſtitutes genius; to which a ſound head and a good heart are as eſſential as a lively imagination. And a man of true genius muſt neceſſarily have as exquiſite a feeling of the moral beauties, as of whatever is great or beautiful in the works of nature; or maſterly in the arts which imitate nature, in poetry, painting, ſtatuary, and muſic.

On the other ſide, where the heart is very bad, the genius and taſte, if there happen to be any pretenſions to them, will be found ſhocking and unnatural. NERO would be nothing leſs than a poet; but his verſes were what one may call moſt

vil-

villainously bad. His taste of magnificence and luxury was horribly glaring, extravagant and unnatural to the last degree.

CALIGULA's taste was so outragiously wrong, that he detested the works of the sweet MANTUAN poet more passionately than ever MOECENAS admired them; and if VIRGIL had unfortunately lived down to those times in which that monster appeared, he would probably have been tortured to death for no other crime but that he wrote naturally, and like an honest man.

True genius may be said to consist of a perfect polish of soul, which receives and reflects the images that fall upon it, without warping or distortion. And this fine polish of soul is, I believe, constantly attended with what philosophers call the moral truth.

There are minds which receive objects truly, and feel the impressions they ought naturally to make, in a very lively manner, but want the faculty of reflecting them; as there are people who, I suppose, feel all the charms of poetry without being poets themselves.

OF TASTE.

OUR notion of taſte may be eaſily underſtood by what has been ſaid upon the ſubject of genius; for mere good taſte is nothing elſe but genius without the power of execution.

It muſt be born; and is to be improved chiefly by being accuſtomed, and the earlier the better, to the moſt exquiſite objects of taſte in its various kinds. For the taſte in writing and painting, and in every thing elſe, is inſenſibly formed upon what we are accuſtomed to; as well as taſte in eating and drinking. One who from his youth has been uſed to drink nothing but heavy diſmal port, will not immediately acquire a reliſh for claret or burgundy.

In the moſt ſtupid ages there is more good taſte than one would at firſt ſight imagine. Even the preſent, abuſe it with what contemptuous epithets you pleaſe, cannot be totally void of it. As long as there are noble humane and generous diſpoſitions amongſt mankind, there muſt be good taſte. For in general, I do not ſay always, the taſte will be

be in proportion to thoſe moral qualities and that ſenſibility of mind from which they take their riſe. And while many, amongſt the great and the learned, are allowed to have taſte for no better reaſon than that it is their own opinion, it is often poſſeſſed by thoſe who are not conſcious of it, and dream as little of pretending to it as to a ſtar and garter. An honeſt farmer, or ſhepherd, who is acquainted with no language but what is ſpoken in his own county, may have a much truer reliſh of the *Engliſh* writers than the moſt dogmatical pedant that ever erected himſelf into a commentator, and from his *Gothic* chair, with an ill-bred arrogance, dictated falſe criticiſm to the gaping multitude.

But even thoſe who are endued with good natural taſte, often judge implicitly and by rote, without ever conſulting their own taſte. Inſtances of this paſſive indolence, or rather this unconſciouſneſs of one's own faculties, appear every day; not only in the fine arts, but in caſes where the mere *taſte*, according to the original meaning of the word, is alone concerned. For I am poſitive there are many thouſands who, if they were

to bring their own palate to a ſevere examination, would diſcover that they really find a more delicious flavour in mutton than in veniſon, in flounder than in turbut, and yet prefer middling or bad veniſon to the beſt mutton; that is, what is ſcarceſt and deareſt, and conſequently what is, from the folly of mankind, the moſt in vogue, to what is really the moſt agreeable to their own private taſte.

In matter of taſte, the public, for the moſt part, ſuffers itſelf to be led by a few who perhaps are really no judges; but who, under the favour of ſome advantages of title, place, or fortune, ſet up for judges, and are implicitly followed even by thoſe who have taſte. Theſe waſhy dictators have learnt at ſchool to admire ſuch authors as have for ages been poſſeſſed of an indiſputed renown: but they would never have been the firſt to have diſcovered ſtrokes of true genius in a cotemporary writer, though they had lived at the court of AUGUSTUS or of Q. ELIZABETH.

So undiſtinguiſhing is our taſte, that if the moſt ſtorpid dunce this fruitful age can boaſt of, could by ſome artful impoſture prepoſſeſs the public, that

that the moſt inſipid of all his own bread-ſauce compoſitions, to be publiſhed next winter, was a piece of MILTON's, or any other celebrated author, recovered from duſt and obſcurity, it would be received with univerſal applauſe; and perhaps be tranſlated into *French* before the town had doated ſix weeks upon it. One might venture to ſay too, that if a work of true ſpirit and genius was to be introduced into the world, under the name of ſome writer of low reputation, it would be rejected even by the greateſt part of thoſe who pretend to lead the taſte. And no wonder, while an eminent vintner has miſtaken his own old hock at nine ſhillings the bottle for that at five.

OF TURGID WRITING.

NOISE and bluſter is what paſſes for ſublime with the great majority of readers; and there are people who think nothing can be ſtrong or ſolid but what is clumſey. Yet the genteel dignity of WHITEHALL, and the elegant chearful ſimplicity of ST. PAUL's in COVENT-GARDEN, may ſtand as long as that purſe-proud wittol the TREASURY, or even the ſquat ſolidity of the HORSE-GUARDS.

1. Unnatural,

Unnatural, forced, exaggerated ſwelling, whether in ſentiments or language, is owing to falſe taſte and want of true genius. The HERCULES of *Goltzius* is that very ſublime in perſon. It is intended to expreſs the moſt exceſſive robuſtneſs of figure: but the painter, in endeavouring to repreſent the human form in its utmoſt degree of ſtrength, has aggravated the demi-god into a mere awkward monſter; as ridiculous a giant as either of the brothers at *Guildhall*.

To take it in another view, that clumſey robuſtneſs of manner, which, by the way, does not partake of true vigour, for that always performs its buſineſs without ſtraining, is the ſame thing to the ſpirited eaſe which is neceſſary to good writing, that the awkward efforts of a huge, heavy, ill-ſhaped dray-horſe, and a lame one too, are to the eaſy actions of the moſt ſupple ARABIAN that ever was dreſt by St. AMOUR.

That writing can never be very good which is not eaſy; but it does not follow that all eaſy writing is good. Writing may be very eaſy, and yet, heaven knows, very inſipid. And when you begin to ſuſpect that your writing is eaſy indeed but wants ſpirit, the wiſeſt thing you can do is to let your pen drop and go to bed.

OF AFFECTATION OF WIT, AND FLORID WRITING.

IT is not always ſo eaſy to get rid of an impertinent companion, as of a ſilly book; otherwiſe, to be for ever aiming at Wit, would be as teizing and intolerable in writing as in converſation. Too much even of genuine Wit is cloying, and the vanity of diſplaying it inceſſantly will fatigue and diſguſt every reader whoſe taſte is true. Olives, caveare, anchovies, and *Dutch* herrings, do very well in their place; but, in the name of all the hoſpitable powers, don't oblige us to dine upon them. Let us firſt lay a foundation of good plain beef or mutton, if you pleaſe: for there is no living upon pickles or ſweet-meats alone.

The ground-work of every performance, even of thoſe which admit or require the greateſt profuſion of ornaments, ought to be plain and ſimple. Obſerve Nature: in the meadow, the ſweet green, which never dazzles the ſight, is the predominant colour; while the gaudy flowers, red, white, yellow, blue, and purple, are careleſsly interſperſed.

This

This is infinitely more pleaſing and beautiful than that inſipid, childiſh, uncomfortable bauble called a flower-knot; and the wild variety of the wood as far excells the richeſt plantation of flowering ſhrubs. I would not be above taking a hint even from the mechanic arts: if a ſuit of cloaths is overcharged with lace, it becomes taudry and ungenteel. In every work, the true taſte is to diſpoſe the ornaments with eaſe and propriety, and not to be affectedly or too oſtentatiouſly prodigal of them. By this means you beſtow upon your performance an elegant richneſs, and ſuch a modeſt dignity as will pleaſe every true eye; though it may quite eſcape the notice of the vulgar, and falſe critics of all ranks, who delight in nothing but what is glaring, tawdry, and oſtentatious. — No, I beg their pardon: for they are ſometimes in raptures, or ſeem to be ſo, with what is altogether inſipid.

Let the ornaments be never ſo well executed, if they are not eaſily and naturally introduced, they will have an awkward effect. The moſt beautiful woman may diſguſt you by oſtentation, and a declared intention to charm. As often as it

it is poſſible to contrive it ſo, the ornaments ſhould be, or at leaſt appear to be, of ſome uſe towards the main deſign of the work: but when they are bluntly produced, and with too bare-faced a purpoſe to dazzle or entertain, inſtead of your admiration, they raiſe your contempt. A maſque, a coronation, or a proceſſion upon our ſtage, is, for the moſt part, an inſipid, tawdry, tireſome ſhew. But if it was really an ornament, to introduce it with propriety and grace, it ought to be contrived as an incident to help on the buſineſs of the piece: as in the maſque in ROMEO and JULIET; and the funeral proceſſion, ſuch as it is, in RICHARD *the Third*; which, notwithſtanding ſome want of *decorum*, as the critics call it, and of probability in the ſcene, has ſtill ſome kind of pretence to aſſiſt in the buſineſs of the fable.

To conclude: The ornamental parts of a work coſt the leaſt trouble to a writer who has any luxuriance of imagination. To ſupport the plain parts with an eaſy dignity, ſo as they ſhall neither become flat on the one hand, nor diſguſtingly ſtiff on the other, is a much more difficult taſk. And

yet

yet if you ſucceed never ſo well here, you will receive little thanks from the generality of readers; who will be apt to imagine they could eaſily perform the ſame kind of work themſelves, till they come to try it.

OF OBSCURE WRITING.

AS the firſt end of all writing and ſpeaking is to be underſtood, it ſeems to follow, that Obſcurity muſt be the greateſt fault in either. One would think it needleſs to inſiſt upon this; yet there are readers ſo abſurd as to admire an author the more for every now and then plunging into the unintelligible: as a daſh of myſtery procures more reverence from weak minds to any ſcheme of religion, than its moſt virtuous or moſt rational precepts. Some clumſey ſcholars too, who muſt needs be making awkward love to the ſcornful Muſes, and tumbling them with their coarſe paws; when they come to an obſcure paſſage in an author, whom they are determined to admire, tell us we muſt not always expect the ſame clearneſs in writers of the firſt claſs as in the more inferior ones. Such is their cant even in talking

talking of dramatic writing, in which Obſcurity is more unpardonable than almoſt in any other kind of production. But the dulleſt and moſt ſhallow of thoſe critics could write obſcurely himſelf; and if he writes much, he muſt have *ill luck* not to do it ſometimes. For to write obſcurely requires no other talent or ſkill than to expreſs one's meaning imperfectly; or if that is not enough, to write without any meaning at all. However, amongſt a different kind of critics, perſpicuity has always been reckoned an eſſential quality to good writing; and if ſometimes a great author is found deficient in this article, it only ſhews how difficult it is to expreſs ſome things with clearneſs and eaſe. For one may very ſafely preſume that no good writer, where it was prudent to ſpeak out, ever expreſt himſelf obſcurely from choice.

OF THE MODERN ART OF SPELLING.

AN author ſeems reduced to great extremities, who flies to new Spelling to diſtinguiſh himſelf.

Theſe innovations are pedantic and conceited trifles; and the beſt, or rather the only good rea-

ſon for ever altering a long eſtabliſhed Spelling is, that the writing may come the nearer to the pronounciation. But our reformers in the art of Spelling, who at preſent chiefly confine themſelves to one claſs of words, to ſubſtantive nouns and verbs derived from the LATIN, ſuch as *honour, favour, labour*, while they write *honor, favor, labor*, increaſe the diſtance between the writing and pronounciation, or rather they produce one where there was none before; for the *u* in all theſe words, except in a few where it is generally omitted in the common ſpelling, as *horror, terror*, is at leaſt as much felt in the pronounciation as the retained vowel *o*. Some have, unhappily enough, ſubjected to the ſame innovation other words, which contain the dipthong *ou*, though they have no relation at all to the LATIN, and write *endeavor, neighbor, behavior*. Why don't they proſcribe this hated *u* in *adjectives* too; and inſtead of *invidious, odious, glorious*, write *invidios, odios, glorios?* As they have gone ſo far, I can ſee no good reaſon why they ſhould ſtop ſhort here.

Trifles betray the character: and it is ſomewhat ſtrange, if it has eſcaped the penetration of thoſe philoſophers

philoſophers who have employed part of their talents in characteriſing the age, that there hardly needed any other inſtance to diſtinguiſh the preſent as an *unmanly* one than this very averſion to the honeſt vowel *u*; without whoſe aſſiſtance it would be impoſſible to pronounce ſome of the moſt important and moſt intereſting words, to any thing of a man, in the whole *Engliſh* language. And it is not unworthy our obſervation here, that a late noble Author, whoſe parts were manly enough in the earlier days of his life, did not begin to *caſtigate* his Spelling after this manner, till he was conſiderably advanced in years.

OF NEW WORDS.

IT is the eaſieſt thing imaginable to coin words. The moſt ignorant of the mobility are apt to do it every day, and are laughed at for it. What beſt can juſtify the introducing a new Word is neceſſity, where there is not an eſtabliſhed one to expreſs your meaning. But while all the world underſtands what is meant by the word *pleaſure*, which ſounds very well too, what occaſion can there be for ſaying * *volupty*?

* See ſome poſthumous works of a right honourable Author, publiſhed not many years ago in *defence* of our holy religion.

Nothing can deform a language ſo much as an inundation of new words and phraſes. It is, indeed, the readieſt way to demoliſh it. If there is any need to illuſtrate the barbarous effects which a mixture of new words muſt produce, only conſider how a diſcourſe, patched all over with ſentences in different languages, would ſound; or how oddly it would ſtrike you in a ſerious converſation to hear, from the ſame perſon, a mixture of all the various dialects and tones of the ſeveral counties and ſhires of the three kingdoms: though it is ſtill the ſame language. To make it ſenſible to the eye; how greatly would a mixture of *Roman*, *Italick*, *Greek*, and *Saxon* characters deform a page? A picture, imitating the ſtyle of different maſters, which is commonly called a Gallery of Painters, can never be pleaſing for the ſame reaſons, want of union and harmony.

The preſent licentious humour of coining and borrowing words, ſeems to portend no good to the *Engliſh* language: and it is grievous to think with what *volupty* two or * *poetararorencouroac* eminent

* The word for the number *three*, in one of the *American* languages; which, to judge by this ſpecimen, cannot be barbarous for want of polyſyllables.

perſonages have *opiniatred* the *inchoation* of ſuch *futile* barbariſms.

In ſhort, the liberty of coining words ought to be uſed with great modeſty. *Horace*, they ſay, gave but two, and *Virgil* only one to the *Latin* tongue, which was ſqueamiſh enough not to ſwallow thoſe, even from ſuch hands, without ſome reluctance.

I cannot conclude without putting our writers and ſpeakers in mind of an excellent advice from Mr. *Pope*, on this ſubject of new and old words:

* *Be not the firſt by whom the new are tried,*
Nor yet the laſt to lay the old aſide.

OF SUPERANNUATED WORDS.

INSTEAD of creating a parcel of awkward new words, I imagine it would be an improvement to degrade many of the old ones from their peerage. I am but a private man, and without authority; but an abſolute prince, if he was of my opinion, would make it capital ever to ſay *encroach* or *encroachment*, or any thing that belongs to *encroaching*.

* See Mr. POPE's *Eſſay on Criticiſm*.

croaching. I would commit *inculcate*, for all its Latinity, to the care of the paviours; and it ſhould never appear above ground again. If you have the leaſt ſympathy with the human ear, never ſay *purport* while you breathe; nor *betwixt*, except you have firſt repeated *between* till we are quite tired of it. *Methinks* ſtrongly reſembles the broken language of a *German* in his firſt attempts to ſpeak *Engliſh*. *Methought* lies under the ſame objection, but it ſounds better.

It is full time that *froward* ſhould be turned out of all good company, eſpecially as *perverſe* is ready at hand to ſupply his place. *Vouchſafe* is a very civil gentleman; but as his courteſy is ſomewhat old-faſhioned, we wiſh he would *deign* or *condeſcend*, or *be pleaſed* to retire.

From what rugged road, I wonder, did *ſwerve deviate* into the *Engliſh* language?—But this *ſubject matter!*—In the name of every thing that is diſguſting and deteſtable, what is it? Is it one or two ugly words? What is the meaning of it? Confound me if ever I could gueſs! Yet one dares hardly ever peep into a preface, for fear of being ſtared in the face with this naſty *ſubject matter*.

Wittol is an old-fashioned, ill-sounding word; but as there is frequent occasion for it, and no other word so perfectly expresses its meaning, we cannot afford to part with it.

But to pick out all the awkward old words, which continue to be as current amongst us as the worn-out sixpences, it would be necessary to peruse the dictionary from A to Z. A most desperate uncomfortable labour? As heart-breaking a task as it would be to wade through half a volume of the *Statutes at large*; nay, by heaven, I would almost as soon take it upon me to read the most insipid tragedy that has been brought upon the stage these seven years. But if one could submit to this labour, and should presume to set a mark upon every word one did not relish, there may be people of a different opinion; and no private person has authority enough to prohibit the use of any word, if he finds it ever so intolerable to his own ear. For my part, I shall endeavour to pass through life as inoffensively as possible, both to the world and my own conscience; and hope, and pray, I may never be reduced to the necessity of using

* *One* WORD, *which dying, I would wish to blot,*

* See the Epilogue to Mr. *Thomson*'s CORIOLANUS.

OF MUSIC.

MUSIC, I presume, can no further be properly called one of the imitative arts, than as it expresses the Passions; and in this respect only can be admitted, as the sister of Poetry and Painting. So that mere harmony has little pretension to such an alliance; for it is no more Music than mere versification is poetry.

The *Italian* compositions, for the most part, mean nothing beyond harmonious sound; and are as much inferior to whatever is truly pathetic in Music, as a tragedy, which depends upon noise and shew, is to a plain passionate one, which represents a natural and moving picture of life, and of the human mind. A family piece, even such a one as the celebrated work of *Vandyke* at *Wilton*; where, though the Drawing is exact, and the attitudes easy and natural, the figures are all gaping and unemployed; is a mighty tame performance when compared with a grand history by *Raphael*, *Rubens*, or the same *Vandyke* himself, where every thing is expressive, warm, passionate, and interesting.

But

But it is not even mere harmony; difficulty of execution is the ſublime, at which the greateſt part of our modern maſters aſpire; as if it required the leaſt genius either to compoſe or execute difficult muſic. While theſe are the objects of emulation amongſt our compoſers and performers, the opera is likely to *continue* a moſt raviſhing entertainment.

We run mad, or rather fooliſh, after this imported muſic; while we have much better of our own. Moſt of the modern *Italian* compoſitions only triſle with the ear: the *Welch*, the *Scotch*, the *Iriſh* muſic, reaches the heart. The productions of our preſent *Italian* maſters are thrummed over for a ſeaſon, becauſe they are new; and forgot for ever afterwards, becauſe when you have heard them twenty times, you find them ſtill as inſipid as at firſt. The muſic, which charmed theſe iſlands long before the boaſted revival of this art in *Italy*, or rather in *Flanders*, is as eſtabliſhed as the ancient claſſics; and thoſe compoſitions, ſhort and ſimple as they are, never become threadbare, but give delight and rapture every time they are heard.

There

There is a certain reſemblance of air between the muſic of the ancient *Britons*, the *Iriſh*, and the *Scotch*; and yet they are all very diſtinguiſhable from one another. There is a remarkable difference of character even between the muſic of the north and the ſouth of *Scotland*. The northern is generally martial, for the moſt part melancholy, and bears a ſtrong reſemblance to the *Iriſh*: the ſouthern is paſtoral and amorous, with ſuch an air of tender melancholy, as love and ſolitude, in a wild romantic country, are apt to inſpire. Each of them has a wildneſs peculiar to itſelf. The wild ſpirit of the ſouth breathes a ſweeter air of rural ſolitude; that of the north is more ſolemn, and ſometimes what one might almoſt call dreadful. Beſides, the gay ſprightly airs which each of them has produced, are in as different ſtyles as the genius and manners of the people in the two extremities of *Scotland*, or the face of the countries they inhabit; both of which are wild, but I believe, with a very different air.

The *Britiſh* poetry is univerſally allowed, by the beſt judges of both, to be much ſuperior to the *Italian*; and why ſhould you wonder to find the

the muſic of the one country brought into competition with that of the other? The muſic of theſe iſlands ſeems to agree in character with that of the ancients; which, from the accounts we have of it, excelled in ſimplicity and paſſion. How ſimple the muſic muſt have been that delighted *Greece* in the days of *Alcæus*, *Sappho*, *Pindar*, and *Anacreon*, ſeems to appear from the very make of their capital inſtrument the Lyre.

OF ENGLISH VERSE.

RHYME, we have often been told, is a modern invention; though, if that was a crime, it might perhaps be proved to be not ſo very modern either. It is reckoned a barbarous one by ſome pedants; who finding, I ſuppoſe, from the opinion of better judges than themſelves, that it is abominable in *Greek* and *Latin*, conclude that it muſt not be leſs ſo in *French* and in *Engliſh*. The contrary is evident to every one that has ears and dares think for himſelf: for in *Engliſh*, rhyme is capable of much harmony; and the *French* can have no verſification without it. But ſome people, who ought to know better, ſeem to make no allowance

allowance for the original deference between one language and another; and are ready to quarrel with the *Engliſh* as a barbarous language, becauſe it is not *Latin* or *Greek*. They do not conſider that every language has powers and graces peculiar to it'elf; and that what is becoming in one would be quite ridiculous in another. Of this it is ſufficient to produce one obvious example: the tranſpoſition of words, which gives ſuch a grace and ſpirit to the *Greek* and *Latin* languages, and without which they would become deteſtably flat and inſipid, does not at all ſuit the genius of the *Engliſh*; except ſometimes in poetry: and, by the way, I am afraid there are too many ungraceful tranſpoſitions current amongſt our *Engliſh* poets.

But it is not only a few obſcure pedants who are thus diſſatisfied with their mother-tongue; and would be glad for its improvement to torture it from its native ſhape, ſome into *Latin* and others into *French*: for attempts of this nature have been actually made by men of ſuperior note. Sir *Philip Sidney*, who, notwithſtanding his affected manner, muſt be allowed to have poſſeſſed a great ſhare of genius, would every now and then ſpur up his gallant

gallant *Engliſh* into a moſt unbecoming ridiculous trot after the *Greek* and *Latin* hexameters. It is certainly impoſſible to introduce the *Greek* and *Latin* meaſures into *Engliſh* poetry with any ſucceſs; yet Sir *Philip* was fond of this project, and purſued it with a ſtrange obſtinacy. He recommended it to *Spencer*; but *Spencer* had too true an ear to reliſh ſuch awkward unnatural verſification, or countenance it by his example. At leaſt there is nothing remains of him to ſhew that he ever practiſed it. There have been attempts made ſince to the ſame purpoſe by *Milton* and ſome later authors. But there never was any thing ſeen ſo ungraceful or ſo deſpicably pedantic as all eſſays of that kind which have hitherto appeared. I do not know that it has ever yet been tried, except by *Milton* in ſome parts of his *Samſon*; but of all the *Greek* or *Latin* meaſures, the iambic ſeems the moſt capable of being adopted into the *Engliſh* poetry.

I have either read or heard that a poet of the laſt century, whom I ſhall not name, becauſe I am not perfectly ſure of the fact, pretended to ſome ſecrets in verſification, which he did not chuſe to communicate. If it was ſo, it ſhewed a jealouſy unworthy

unworthy of ſo great a maſter of numbers: he might ſafely enough, for his own ſuperiority, have publiſhed thoſe ſecrets whatever they were; for it is impoſſible they could ever be of much uſe. He could eaſily adviſe you to vary your pauſes, and tell you which are the moſt graceful: but theſe and all ſuch precepts are nothing to the purpoſe; a good ear will naturally produce harmony without the leaſt regard or attention to rules; and there is no cure for a bad one. The only way to improve the ear, whether good or bad, is to accuſtom it to the moſt harmonious writing.

N.B. Blank verſe admits of a greater variety of pauſes than rhyme, and is partly for that reaſon the fitteſt for works of any conſiderable length. But in *Engliſh* poetry I queſtion whether it is poſſible, with any ſucceſs, to write odes, epiſtles, elegies, paſtorals, or ſatires, without rhyme. And it happens luckily, that in theſe ſhort pieces the ear has not time to be tired with the return of the chimes: which, in my humble opinion, had better ſometimes play a little falſe to one another than be for ever ſcrupulouſly exact; provided ſuch licences never ſhock the ear.

It does not require a very exquiſite ear to write two ſmooth or even harmonious lines running: yet in rhime, a poet, who is always very careful to poliſh his couplet, may paſs with the multitude for a great maſter in verſification. But as long as his harmony is confined within ſuch narrow bounds, he writes but like a ſchool-boy, who keeps in the line only with the help of ruled paper.

Dr. *Swift* and Mr. *Pope* took offence, one does not know why, at the triplet, and very rarely condeſcended to admit it into their verſe. It is true, it had been uſed to a nauſeous exceſs by ſome taſteleſs writers; and Mr. *Pope*'s own imitation of *Rocheſter* might juſtly enough give him a diſguſt to the triplet for his whole life. Yet it contributes not a little to the grace of *Dryden*'s verſification: and I can ſee no reaſon why it ſhould be prohibited now; as it gives a variety to the numbers, which in rhyme are ſufficiently limited to require ſuch a help: beſides it may often be in your power by its means to compreſs within three lines, what muſt otherwiſe ſtraggle into four, and of courſe become languid and ſpiritleſs.

Variety

Variety is the ſoul of verſification; and the march of the lines ought to be adapted to the ſubject. The meaſure is the ſame in both; but had *Horace* wrote his epiſtles or ſatires in the ſame kind of numbers with *Virgil's* ÆNEID, it would have been a monſtrous impropriety; like hunting the fox or hare on a war-horſe, with the equipage of a general at a review, or on the day of battle. He knew very well, that in familiar writing dignity of verſification would be quite ridiculous. Accordingly in thoſe parts his numbers are looſe, rambling, and often almoſt proſaic. But in his moſt careleſs and licentious periods he ſeldom or never hurts the ear: and as often as there is any thing great in his ſentiment, his expreſſion and numbers riſe in proportion, and ſuſtain themſelves with a native unaffected dignity; till without falling he deſcends on eaſy and dextrous wings to the familiar again.

It does not ſeem quite foreign to the preſent ſubject to take ſome notice of a certain *French* author, who after having given it as his opinion, that *Mr.* Pope *is the moſt harmonious of all the* Engliſh *poets*, adds, with a very plauſible aſſurance, that *he has reduced*

reduced the ſharp hiſſings of the Engliſh *trumpet to the ſweet ſounds of the flute* *. It is no great wonder, that one who is apt to write much at random, ſhould preſume to talk ſo contemptuouſly of a manly, an elegant, and harmonious language, with which he plainly appears to have but a very ſuperficial acquaintance. But who ever talked before of the *hiſſings of a trumpet*—or of *ſharp hiſſings?* We have all heard of the *hoarſe trumpet*, but the *hiſſing trumpet* is an inſtrument with which we are not yet acquainted. However, to paſs theſe little improprieties, this compliment to Mr. *Pope* ſhews how well this critic is qualified to pronounce ſentence upon the *Engliſh* poets. No one is more ſenſible than I am of Mr. *Pope*'s merit; but his blindeſt admirer might ſtartle at the preference beſtowed upon him here. For, not to mention the great names of *Spenſer*, *Shakeſpear*, and *Milton*, upon ſuch an occaſion; let us only compare Mr. *Pope* in this point of view with a writer upon whom, as they ſay, he formed himſelf, and whom not only in his own opinion, but

* Mr. Pope—*Eſt, je crois, le poete le plus elegant, le plus correct, et ce qui eſt encore beaucoup, le plus harmonieux qu'ait eu l'*Angleterre. *Il a reduit les ſifflemens aigres de la trompette* Angloiſe *au ſons doux de la flute.* VOLTAIRE—*Lettres ſur les* Anglois.

in that of many others, he is thought to have excelled in the art of verſifying. It is almoſt needleſs, after this, to ſay that I mean *Dryden*; whoſe verſification I take to be the moſt muſical that has yet appeared in rhyme. Round, ſweet, pompous, ſpirited and various; it flows with ſuch a happy volubility, ſuch an animated and maſterly negligence, as I am afraid will not ſoon be excelled. From the fineneſs of his ear, his proſe too is perhaps the ſweeteſt, the moſt mellow and generous, that the *Engliſh* language has yet produced.

Had Mr. *Voltaire* known as much of the *Engliſh* poets as he pretends to do, he might have found ſomething like the *ſweet ſound of the flute* in Mr. *Waller*; who wrote before Mr. *Pope* was born. Mr. *Voltaire*, before he preſumed to compare the *Engliſh* poets, ſhould have known, that before Mr. *Waller* appeared, there was one *Edmund Spenſer* a poet, whoſe verſe was not merely indolently ſmooth, but ſpirited alſo and harmonious. And if Mr. *Voltaire* was a perfect and a candid judge in this caſe, he would own, that there was more harmony in many of the *Engliſh* poets—much more than the French language can attain to, or

an ear debauched by the *French* verſification is capable of reliſhing.

OF THE VERSIFICATION OF ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

THE greateſt part of our modern writers of Tragedy ſeem to think it enough to write mere blank verſe; no matter however hard it be, however void of ſwelling and harmony. Even thoſe of them who write the beſt numbers, ſtudy to be ſolemn and pompous throughout, and affect a monotony of heroic Verſification, from the firſt appearance of the heroine with her confidante, to her laſt fatal exit; without the leaſt regard to the variety of paſſions, which expreſs themſelves in quick or ſlow, flowing or interrupted, in languiſhing or impetuous movements.

The proper Verſification of *Engliſh* Tragedy is moſt certainly blank verſe; but as different from the ſolemn and majeſtic movement of heroic poetry as the Iambic is from the Hexameter. What a monſtrous production would a *Greek* or *Latin* tragedy in Hexameter Verſe appear!—The ancients found the grave Iambic their proper meaſure for

tragedy; as it is at the ſame time capable of all the dignity which that kind of poem requires, and deſcends with the greateſt eaſe to the level of proſe and converſation. Such as is the Iambic in *Latin*, is blank verſe in *Engliſh*: but by no means the blank verſe of *Paradiſe Loſt*.

The numbers ought to be accommodated to the paſſion: and though in ſome parts of tragedy it is proper they ſhould be ſlow, or ſolemn, or languiſhing, they ought for the moſt part to run ſomewhat rambling and irregular; and often rapid and ſubſultory, ſo as to imitate the natural cadence and quick turns of converſation.

Shakeſpear, who I will venture to ſay had the moſt muſical ear of all the *Engliſh* poets, is abundantly irregular in his Verſification: but his wildeſt licences ſeldom hurt the ear; on the contrary, they give his verſe a ſpirit and variety, which prevents its ever cloying. Our modern tragedy-writers, inſtead of uſing the advantages of their own language, ſeem in general to imitate the monotony of the *French* Verſification: and the only licence they ever venture upon, is that poor tame

one

one the ſupernumerary ſyllable at the end of a line; which they are apt to manage in ſuch a manner as to give their verſe a moſt ungraceful halt. But it is not want of ear alone which makes our common manufacturers of tragedy ſo inſipidly ſolemn and ſo void of harmony: it is want of feeling. For let the ear be what it will, if the paſſions are warmly felt, they will naturally expreſs themſelves in their proper tones.

Tragedy requires a greater variety of numbers than any other poetical productions; as it is the moſt agitated with different paſſions. The march of every poem of any conſiderable length, but chiefly of tragedy, ought to reſemble the courſe of a river, through a large extent of country, diverſified with plains, hills and mountains. The ſtream, according as the ground lies through which it flows, is either ſlow, ſmooth and ſolemn; or briſk and ſportful; or rapid, impetuous and precipitate. Such and ſo various ought to be the Verſification of tragedy; inſtead of that ſtiff affected importance of movement, which is now abſurdly and awkwardly ſupported through the whole courſe of theſe ſublime performances,

But beſides this ſtudied dignity; this inflexible gravity of pace; this unvaried exactneſs of meaſure without ſpirit or harmony; this immoveable hardneſs and want of fluctuation in the lines; there is no language ſo unnatural as that you meet with in moſt of our modern tragedies. The characters they repreſent are too heroic, it would ſeem, and too much exalted above common life to ſpeak *after the manner of men*. The misfortune is, moſt of our tragedy-writers labour with all their might, and keep themſelves perpetually upon the rack, to ſay every thing poetically: for it never enters into their head, that the moſt natural is the moſt poetical way of ſaying common things; except ſometimes where you can properly raiſe your expreſſion by an eaſy metaphor. Let the ſentiments be ſuch as beſt ſuit the character and ſituation, and they cannot be expreſt with too much plainneſs and ſimplicity; provided all vulgariſms are as much as poſſible avoided.

As to the Characters; if it was not for a very few exceptions, one would think the art of drawing them was loſt amongſt our dramatic writers. Thoſe that appear in moſt of our modern plays,

tragedies

tragedies call them or comedies, are like bad portraits; which indeed repreſent the human features, but without life or meaning, or thoſe diſtinguiſhing ſtrokes which, in the incomparable HOGARTH and in every great hiſtory painter, make you imagine you have ſeen ſuch perſons as appear in the picture. In ſhort, thoſe mechanical performances are as imperfect as unnatural repreſentations of human life, of the manners and paſſions of mankind, as the *Gothic* knights which lie along in armour in the Temple church are of the human figure.

OF IMITATION.

THE humble vanity, as one may call it, of imitating another perſon's manner, is one great ſource of affectation; which is generally ridiculous, and always diſagreeable. A perſon whoſe natural turn is genteel, if he keeps good company, will inſenſibly acquire as much of their manner as becomes him; but if he ſets up any one as a pattern to be exactly imitated, his behaviour will grow conſtrained, ſtiff and affected. Such will be the conſtant ſucceſs of ſo abſurd an at-

tempt to confine the variety of nature; which plainly intends that mankind ſhould be diſtinguiſhable one from another by their air, voice, and manner, no leſs than by their faces.

A poet, a painter, or a player, that imitates cloſely will never excel; and this will hold good in every thing elſe that belongs to genius. It is true, that education and ſtudy are neceſſary to the improvement of genius: but to this purpoſe it is ſufficient to be familiarly acquainted with the greateſt maſters; and the earlier in life the better. By this means, if you delight in them, and have any ſimilarity with them, you will catch their graces without affecting it; and your own original characteriſtical manner will ſtill diſtinguiſh itſelf. But if you ſtudy to form yourſelf upon them, you become only a copy of a copy. The greateſt of them excel by their happy ſkill in copying nature: and if you content yourſelf with ſervilely copying them, without drawing immediately from the common ſubject *nature*; you will always be inferior to your original, and have no chance ever to produce any thing great or ſtriking.

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cause bu[illegible] When this happens to a writer who, with the advantages of leisure and easy circumstances, is capable of producing such works as might charm succeeding ages, it is a disgrace to the nation and the times wherein such a genius had the misfortune to appear.

It belongs to true genius to indulge its own humour; to give a loose to its own sallies; and to be curbed, restrained and directed by that sound judgment alone which necessarily attends it. It belongs to it to improve and correct the public taste;

taſte; not to humour or meanly proſtitute itſelf to the groſs or low taſte which it finds. And you may depend upon it, that whatever author labours to accommodate himſelf to the taſte of his age—ſuppoſe it, if you pleaſe, this preſent age—the ſickly wane, the impotent decline of the eighteenth century: which from a hopeful boy became a moſt inſignificant man; and for any thing that appears at preſent will die a very fat drowſy blockhead, and be damned to eternal infamy and contempt: every ſuch author I ſay, though he may thrive as far as an author can in the preſent age, will by degrees languiſh into obſcurity in the next. For though naked and bare-faced vanity; though an active exertion of little arts, and the moſt unremitting perſeverance in them; though party, cabal, and intrigue; though accidental advantages, and even whimſical circumſtances; may conſpire to make a very moderate genius the idol of the implicit multitude: works that lean upon ſuch fickle props, that ſtand upon ſuch a falſe foundation, will not be long able to ſupport themſelves againſt the injuries of time. Such buildings begin to totter almoſt as ſoon as their ſcaffolding is ſtruck.

But if you find it neceſſary to comply with the humour of your age; the writing beſt calculated to pleaſe a falſe taſte is what has ſomething of the air of good writing, without being really ſo. For to the vulgar eye the ſpecious is more ſtriking than the genuine. The beſt writing is apt to be too plain, too ſimple, too unaffected, and too delicate to ſtir the callous organs of the generality of critics, who ſee nothing but the tawdry glare of tinſel; and are deaf to every thing but what is ſhockingly noiſy to a true ear. They are ſtruck with the fierce glaring colours of old *Frank*; with attitudes and expreſſions violent, diſtorted, and unnatural: while the true, juſt and eaſy, the graceful, the moving, the ſublime repreſentations of *Raphael* have not the leaſt power to attract them. The bullying, noiſy march in *Judas Macchabeus* has perhaps more ſincere admirers than that moſt pathetic one in *Saul:* and in converſation pertneſs and mere vivacity is more felt by the general run of company than eaſy unaffected wit; as flaſhy, bouncing, flatulent cyder boaſts of more ſpirit than the ſtill vigour of reſerved *Madeira.*

But the eaſieſt, as well as the moſt effectual way of writing to the bad taſte of your age, is to ſet out

out while your genius is yet upon a level with it. Accordingly, if you have a ſon who begins to diſplay a hopeful bloom of imagination, be ſure to publiſh, with all the advantages that can be procured, the very firſt eſſays of his genius. They will hardly be too good to pleaſe; and beſides, they have a chance to be received with particular favour and admiration as the productions of a young muſe. When he has thus taken poſſeſſion of the public ear, he may venture, as his genius ripens, to do his beſt; he may write as well as he can, perhaps without much danger of ſinking in reputation. The renown of his firſt crude eſſays will be ſufficient to prejudice the mobility, great and ſmall, in favour of the moſt exquiſite pieces he can produce afterwards. But if he muſt live by his wit, the beſt thing you can do for him is to tranſplant him, as early as poſſible, to PARIS; where in the worſt of days, in the moſt *Gothic* muſe-deteſting age, there is ſtill ſome ſhelter afforded to the moſt delicate as well as the moſt uncommon flower that bloſſoms in the human mind. In that gay ſerene and genial climate the muſes are ſtill more or leſs cultivated, though not with the ſame ardour and paſſion in every age; as appears from the following

lowing paſſage tranſlated from a * *French* author, who wrote about the beginning of the preſent century. "Almoſt all the arts have in their turns "experienced that diſguſt and love of change "which is natural to mankind. But I don't know "that any one of them has felt it more than Poetry; "which in ſome ages has been exalted to a tri- "umphal heighth, in others neglected, diſcourag- "ed and deſpiſed. About ſixty years ago, under "the adminiſtration of one of the greateſt geniuſes "that ever *France* produced, poetry found itſelf "amongſt us at its higheſt pitch of glory. Thoſe "who cultivated the muſes were regarded with "particular favour: this art was the road to for- "tune and dignified ſtations. But in theſe days "this ardour ſeems to be conſiderably abated. "We do not appear to be extremely ſenſible to "poetical merit, &c."

* Defenſe de la Poeſie; par M. l'Abbé *Meſſieu*. *Memoires de Literature, Tome* 2de.

OF PHYSIOGNOMY, OR THE SIMILITUDE BETWEEN THE PERSON AND THE MIND.

THAT the face is a falſe glaſs is a vulgar error, and ſeems to have taken its riſe from a few exceptions: for all mankind are ſo much phyſiognomiſts that whoever happens to find himſelf miſtaken, though but for once, joins the cry of the proverb. All are not alike ſkilled in faces, any more than in unravelling of characters; even the moſt penetrating eye may be miſtaken: yet I will preſume to ſay, that the face is ſeldom a falſe glaſs; and when it proves ſo, it is generally the fault of the beholder. Perhaps indeed nature has made ſome cheats, ſome to appear worſe, many much better than they are. This is of a piece with her uſual variety, and was perhaps partly intended to check the preſumption of mankind in judging too raſhly of one another. Yet ſtill the face is not a falſe glaſs. On the contrary, where the qualities of the mind are eminent, it generally ſhews them. For the features of the mind commonly follow thoſe of the face; as the figure of moſt animals, whoſe characters are ſtrong, is expreſſive of their nature. Though you had never heard

heard of a lion, a tiger, a ſerpent, or an alligator, it is natural to think you would at the firſt ſight be afraid of them rather than of a hare, or even a horſe, whoſe appearance might prove formidable, but more from his ſize than his make.

The mind is for the moſt part viſible in the perſon. Thus, a beariſh figure is almoſt certainly the rhind or huſk of a rude rough ſoul, never to be poliſhed by any cultivation. If you find any ſweetneſs in the kernel of ſuch a rugged ſhell, it is more than you ought to expect; for a man is one thing, and a cheſnut another. The voice too is in general harſh or ſweet, conformably to the features; and where faces reſemble one another, you'll perceive a remarkable ſimilitude in the voice.

Senſe and virtue are often to be found under a plain face and clumſey figure; but elegance and delicacy of mind generally appear in the perſon. Where a falſe and ſpecious elegance appears in the face, you may expect the ſame in the mind; and the herd of mankind will admire them more than the true. Sometimes you meet with a delicate and elegant mind under a face that cannot properly

properly be called handſome: but then you will generally obſerve a ſpirit and expreſſion in ſuch a face that pleaſes a true eye much more than mere regular beauty; for the beſt part of beauty is air, meaning and expreſſion.

The ancient *Greeks*, beſides their being the moſt ingenious and elegant, were the moſt beautiful race of mortals that ever appeared in the world. The modern *Greeks* preſerve the fine mould of their anceſtors; and, if they were bleſt with liberty, would probably in a ſhort time exceed all their neighbours in every excellence that human nature can boaſt of, whether ornamental or ſolid. Exquiſite organs are, I believe, for the moſt part, beautiful too; and it is better to have a handſome ear than a very large one. Though the latter is by the laws of the animal œconomy more favourably contrived for the over-hearing of a whiſper.

It is a common obſervation, that the painter conſtantly draws the fineſt *hands* whoſe own is of an elegant make. This is univerſally aſcribed to a cauſe which is perhaps more obvious and plauſible than true: for the painter often draws a hand in attitudes in which he never ſees his own. It

was

was probably more owing to ſomething within themſelves, than to the different ſtiles of nature to which they were accuſtomed, that RUBENS and RAPHAEL are ſo different in their ideas of beauty and their repreſentations of the human form. VANDYKE ſtudied under RUBENS; and as he lived in the ſame country, was accuſtomed to the ſame kind of objects with his maſter: yet their works are as different as their perſons were; the one robuſt, but rather clumſey; the other handſome and genteel. In ſhort, the productions of the genius ſeem to be a kind of propagation, and bear a family reſemblance to the parent.

OF PREJUDICES, POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, OR NATIONAL.

THIS ungenerous ſpirit, theſe ill-natured humours are ſo extremely abſurd, that if ſtrong inſtances of them were not ſeen every day, it would be impoſſible for a man of ſenſe to believe them. For my own part, if I am totally free from any of the common weakneſſes of mankind, I take it to be this. What is it to me what any man's principles are as to religion or government? He

has perhaps as good a right as I, perhaps a better, to keep ſteady to the principles in which he was educated. My religion may, for want of early inſtruction, appear as ſtrange to him as his can to me. Theſe things are all merely accidental and the effect of education: for a hot-headed churchman, bred at any proteſtant univerſity, or the foureſt chriſtian that ever diſſented from the orthodox church of *England*, would have been as violent a Mahometan, if he had received his ſyſtem of religion from the MUFTI at *Conſtantinople*. Can it be ſuppoſed, that heaven puts itſelf at the head of any religious party!—I humbly think it appears plainly enough, that the Almighty who diſplays ſuch infinite variety in all his works, no more intended that all mankind ſhould be of the ſame religion, than that they ſhould all be of one colour, ſpeak the ſame language, obſerve the ſame cuſtoms, and wear the ſame dreſs: and it is not leſs reaſonable than charitable to believe, that the virtuous of all religions are equally acceptable to the univerſal Father. For little as we know of heaven, I hope we may, without any blaſphemy, preſume that the ſuperior powers are at leaſt as reaſonable as the beſt of *us*.

It

It is ſtill not quite out of nature for people in certain humours, whether from the wine or the weather, to grow ſour to one another for matters of mere opinion; nay, and proceed to downright quarrelling, either for the glory of God, or their own vanity. But the utmoſt effort of narrow-thinking, and what appears perfectly aſtoniſhing, is the averſion which ſome people bear in their minds to all thoſe who did not happen to be born on the ſame ſpot, in the ſame little iſland, or the ſame corner of an iſland with themſelves. Good God! would you have all the world to have been born in *Ireland?* In the name of every thing that is whimſical, what does it ſignify where a man was born? Can it be either a merit or a crime, an honour or a diſgrace, to have been born in any particular ſpot of this globe; were it in *St. Gile's*, the *Old Bailey*, or even within the execrable walls of *Newgate* itſelf? One would think they muſt be at a prodigious loſs for ſome thing to value themſelves upon who are proud of the place of their birth. Moſt people pretend to laugh at what is called family pride: and yet, though according to nice herald-like ceremony, the ſon, as the better gentleman, ought to take the wall of the father; this kind of pride is perhaps not quite a proper object of ridicule: for whoever

eſteems himſelf upon account of his noble anceſtry, muſt of courſe emulate their virtues, and be afraid to violate their memory by any action unworthy of them. It is needleſs, and might be miſtaken for flattery, to produce the many ſhining examples of this generous emulation which adorn the preſent age. Even without any very diſtinguiſhing merit of his own, the ſon has often ſome claim to a favourable reception for the ſake of his father. But he ſtands upon a very bleak ſituation who has nothing to ſhelter him from contempt but the name of his country. For heaven's ſake what country is it the moſt honourable to have been born in? What climate? What latitude?—Under the Equator? Or what particular diſtance from it? I hope it is not in thoſe climates where the weather is the fineſt, and the ſeaſons the moſt agreeable. But is there a country, at leaſt in *Chriſtendom*, where the generality of the people, rough as they run, are not as ſtupid and as wicked as the arch enemy of mankind would wiſh to make them? The great bulk of the *Iriſh*,—I'm ſorry to ſay it,—are bad enough, very ragged cattle indeed; it is in vain to deny it—The general run of the *Scotch*, as well as of the *French*, *Spaniards*, and *Italians*, is ſo very, ſo extremely little better, that

that it might puzzle the moſt ſagacious connoiſſeur to pronounce which is worſt—The *Engliſh*, though for every kind of merit, as eſtimable as any nation in *Europe*, are, with regard to the great majority of their individuals, juſt as unhappy as the reſt. God preſerve us! what ſtrange animals, what ſhabby chriſtians have had the honour to be born in the metropolis of *Great Britain!*—of reputable, moſt reputable parents too!—in this very *London!* and not to talk of *Rag-fair* or *Drury-Lane*, in the ſuperb neighbourhood of *Groſvenor-ſquare*, and *St. James's* itſelf.

But the merit or value ſtamped upon any animal from the meridian of its nativity, is not more fantaſtical than that which it receives from the place of its education. Yet there are thouſands who dream, that no ſcience is to be learnt but within thoſe very walls whence after many years reſidence themſelves had come into the world with a moderate enough ſhare of erudition. It would be highly unreaſonable to reflect upon any ſchool becauſe a great number of dunces happened to have been bred there: bu people of this narrow way of thinking are real a reproach to their tutors. One would be ſorry ſee any illiberal jealouſy

riſe amongſt our univerſities for ſuch a ſimple diſpute (a yet *tetrior quam teterrima belli cauſa)* as which of them has ſent out the moſt numerous herd of learned blockheads. For any blockhead, whoſe genius leads him to much poring over heavy volumes, may become a man of great learning in the moſt illiterate ground, in the moſt unconſecrated you can name. But for their own ſakes it is to be hoped, that thoſe learned bodies will agree to ſuppreſs all animoſities of this nature; leſt in the courſe of their altercations it ſhould be diſcovered, that all thoſe ſeminaries of learning, however dignified with the ſpecious titles of academies, colleges, or univerſities, are mere artful impoſitions upon the ignorance of mankind. For there are many inſtances to prove with what ſmall helps from education good natural parts may ſhine: and a man may turn out a very conſiderable blockhead without ever having been taught metaphyſics.

As the moſt hopeful antidote to the poyſon of this very domeſtic education, one would preſcribe a viſit to foreign parts. And if after a ramble through *Europe*, the obſtinate malignity ſhould ſtill ſhew itſelf in freſh eruptions, it might be worth

worth while to try a ſeven years reſidence in *America*: if the patient returns before he is thoroughly cured, I can ſee no good reaſon why he ſhould not be tranſplanted for life.

But a ſtrong obſtacle to the cure of this folly, is the advantage which ſome *honeſt* people find in fomenting it. For the mob, I mean the great bulk of mankind, in judging of men are mere botaniſts: they diſtinguiſh them only by their outward types; the claſs or tribe they belong to, or *ſeem* to belong to. For want of being able to penetrate a little deeper into the character, they prefer a man for the cock or no cock of his hat, or the healths he toaſts; and are the more obſtinate in their attachment to him, the leſs reaſon they can give for it. As the votaries of any religion are the more zealous and violent, the further its principles are removed from common ſenſe.

To conclude, as we begun, with Religion. It is nothing to me in whom or in what any man believes. I have no objection in the world to an honeſt man, becauſe he believes in MAHOMET, as long as he gives himſelf no impertinent trouble about my faith. Nay, I could live upon good

terms even with a Deiſt: provided he keeps within the bounds of decency; and does not carry with him through life that juvenile vanity, which will not ſuffer him to be quiet, till he has told all the world, that he laughs at thoſe things which they conſider as the moſt ſacred and inviolable.

OF MORAL ATTRACTION AND REPULSION.

Oderunt hilarem triſtes, triſtemq; jocoſi,
Sedatum celeres, agilem gnavumq; remiſſi.
HOR.

The ſullen hate the gay, the gay the ſad,
The ſlow the active, and the quick the ſtaid.

THIS was obſerved by one who knew mankind as thoroughly as moſt writers. And it is an obſervation that may juſtly be extended to all people of oppoſite diſpoſitions. For every knave naturally hates an honeſt man; and the dimmeſt moſt miſty blockhead has penetration enough, except you would rather call it inſtinct, to diſcover a man of parts; and cold virulence enough to deteſt him. The miſer abhors the man who generouſly enjoys his fortune; and hopes to ſee the prodigal ſtarve. As this is the caſe, it would

would require ſome ſkill in the doctrine of chances, to calculate how many enemies a man of ſenſe and integrity is likely to have for one friend.

On the other hand, people of ſimilar characters are apt to like one another. There is not a genuine ruffian in *Turkey*, not even in *Chriſtendom*, ſo abandoned to all ſenſe of humanity, ſo void of all ſympathy with the human-kind, that would not take ſome little pains at leaſt to favour the eſcape of the wretch who had juſt murdered his father. Upon theſe two principles of averſion and attachment, if they are not rather, in the preſent view, one and the ſame, it is probable that the moſt important of human affairs ſometimes depend. It is perhaps more owing to this than to any ſingle cauſe beſides, that one age is ſo different from another. For a very few individuals in a nation may have influence enough to throw the great weight of its buſineſs into ſuch hands as ſhall render it either glorious or contemptible, either miſerable or proſperous.

But it is now full time to conclude: for when the writer is tired, it is highly probable the reader muſt begin to yawn, if he is not faſt aſleep already.

ready. For which reaſons, what I had further to ſay ſhall be diſpatched in as few words as poſſible, and without any over-ſcrupulous attention to method or regularity.

SENTENCES.

THE ſententious manner of writing is apt to be dry, and to give diſguſt by its oracular air, and a dogmatical over-bearing pretenſion to wiſdom. Perhaps it would be better, if its ſeverity was alleviated with a comfortable mixture of human nonſenſe. For, to be perpetually *wiſe*, is forbidding, unſocial, and ſomething that does not become human nature; as it does not belong to it. Why ſhould a ſchool-maſter, a parſon, or an apothecary, affect to be as ſolemn and ſublime the whole year round, as if he was a ſeraph or an archangel come to *dwell among ſt us?*

The world has been ſhamefully impoſed upon by many an important fool: but no man of ſenſe ever took any pains to appear wiſe; as no honeſt man ever uſed any tricks to diſplay his own integrity.

Moſt

Moſt fools, and many ſenſible people, are conceited: but people of the beſt ſenſe never are ſo.

Affectation labours with a diligence that fatigues every ſpectator, but with infallible ſucceſs, to defeat its own purpoſe; for inſtead of creating love or admiration, it provokes our averſion and contempt. The moſt amiable people are always the leaſt affected. Let us make the beſt of what nature has done for us: ſhe may be improved, but all attempts to alter her from her original ſhape will only expoſe us to ridicule. That awkward beaſt the dromedary, as long as he has any ſenſe, will never pretend to be a BAJAZET or an OTHELLO.

I knew a poor gentleman who uſed to be grievouſly tormented with violent fits of the head-ach, becauſe a celebrated poet was ſubject to that complaint. Such a head-ach I ſuppoſe as JUPITER felt juſt before he was delivered of PALLAS by the rough midwifry of VULCAN's hammer; which ſeems to give a broad hint towards the cure of this kind of *Cephalalgia*, as the learned doctors delight to call it.

Affectation

Affectation is the bane of every thing. An honeſt, plain, downright blockhead, ſuppoſing him at the ſame time good-natured, may not only be an uſeful but an agreeable creature. But when a blockhead is ſeized with the whim of being a fine gentleman or a wit, the Lord have mercy upon him—and us.

I am not offended at the inſipidity of r. MFitz Dotterell's obſervation, nor even at its impertinence, becauſe I know he meant me no harm: what provokes me, is that he calls it a joke.

A fellow who, without a grain of wit or humour, will always be joking, is not only a diſagreeable and contemptible companion, but a dangerous one. For his awkward, unwary nonſenſe will be apt one time or another to make him ſtumble into a quarrel; and he may loſe his friend, or perhaps his life, without the ſatisfaction of having had a good joke for it.

T'other bottle won't do—No, nor the other hogſhead neither—You great pale-eyed loggerhead, you muſt have patience—You muſt wait a good while before you rouſe Mr. Truewit's mettle.

mettle—A long time, indeed!—You muſt wait till your own wit begins to ſparkle—I am afraid you muſt wait till you're gone.—There is a ſecret power in your preſence enough to check every thing that's genial—You are worſe than a fog or the eaſt wind—The candles burn dim while you're here—and the burgundy drinks as flat as port. Good night. Here's to your good repoſe. May you ſleep like any porpus!—But hark ye, good Mr. VAN NUMB, before you go—You can't live without wit it ſeems—Bleſs your fat head! are you ſure that you know wit when you hear it?—Let me be curſt if you do, even when you pore over it in print at the rate of an octavo page in an hour.

It is illiberal, inhuman, and unreaſonable in the higheſt degree to inſult any man for his being dull: but when dullneſs pretends to genius or parts, it becomes a fair object of ridicule.

True ſatire may be called the rage of probity, and even of good-nature. It is the indignation of virtue and wit againſt vice, ill-nature, and affectation.

From

From wit to metaphyfics is a deſperate ſtride, yet we will venture it rather than defer our opinion of this ſcience to any future occaſion. We take metaphyſics, in the degree to which they are carried by certain philoſophers, to be *the art of talking grave nonſenſe upon ſubjects that lie beyond the reach of the human underſtanding.* Better talk about the weather ſtill; or blunder through the miſt of politics; or retail thoſe inſipid daily lies we call *news.*

I have ſeen people, that were no fools, laugh at the wrong place, and without being tickled, that they might not appear dull at taking a joke. What is worſe, I have known people, who were not quite fools neither, affect to be angry without feeling any affront; becauſe they would not be thought to want apprehenſion or ſpirit.

Vanity, beſides the ſecret pleaſure it gives one's ſelf, is a very thriving quality; and it is not politic to be at any pains to diſguiſe it, except amongſt people of the beſt ſenſe. For the generality of the world will have the ſame opinion of you that you ſeem to have of yourſelf.

Falſe

Falſe or middling genius is almoſt always arrogant and vain. The true may be provoked to do itſelf juſtice; but is ſeldom apt to overvalue itſelf.

Though vanity and pride are very different things, we may talk here of that kind of pride which hurts your inferiors; and keeps thoſe at a diſtance who are never likely to abuſe your familiarity. It ſeems to be the conſciouſneſs of little minds, who are afraid of being ſeen too near. It is to be proud only where you may, with the utmoſt ſafety, be ſo; for *thoſe* proud people are almoſt always mean and ſervile to ſuch as rank above themſelves.

Now that we are talking of unreaſonable animals: there is a waſpiſh fellow who muſt diſcharge his venom where he dares; and every day uſes you like a dog—becauſe he's your *couſin* truly, and may be free with you. When the wind is eaſterly this *couſin* becomes abſolutely intolerable. Perhaps, after all, he intends you no great miſchief in the main. But, in my opinion, the beſt way to manage ſuch a *couſin* is to give him a moſt inhuman threſhing. He'll bounce, and fling, and

from the ſame cauſe perhaps a much greater number of ſhocking monſters have been ſmothered and ſuppreſſed. For I am afraid there are more NEROS and CARACALLAS than TITUSES or TRAJANS in private life, who want nothing but to be emperors to ſhew themſelves. Immortal gods! how many thouſand CLAUDIUSES *are at this hour aſleep* between HYDE PARK CORNER and WAPPING!

I am afraid it is eaſier to corrupt good natural diſpoſitions by education and habit than to ſubdue bad ones.

There are people that were born lyars; who tell you every day very ſeriouſly a parcel of inſipid unmeaning lies, and probably believe them. It is a mere odd kind of weakneſs in them; they cannot help it; perhaps they are not ſenſible of it. Nay, I don't know whether there is not ſuch an abſurd creature as a thief that has little more ſcheme or meaning than a pilfering jackdaw.

Though there are ſtrange inconſiſtent mixtures in human nature, there never yet was a very fine underſtanding where the heart was bad.

There is a parcel of crazy worthleſs people who ſet up for wits, and bring the name of POET under a kind of diſgrace with thoſe who do not know that there can be no true genius without a ſound underſtanding and an honeſt heart.

Some of thoſe people do more indiſcreet, irrational, abſurd things than even nature prompts them to: ſome become ſots, and affect every thing that is indecent and ſhocking, merely that they may paſs, good God! for men of genius; and they are admitted as ſuch by the majority of their acquaintance for no other reaſon.

Oddities and ſingularities of behaviour may attend genius; when they do, they are its misfortunes, and its blemiſhes. The man of true genius will be aſhamed of them: at leaſt he never will affect to diſtinguiſh himſelf by whimſical particularities.

In ſhort, good ſenſe is the ſolid foundation of all genius, and of every thing that is truly ornamental. It is neceſſary, in ſome degree, even to a good fidler: ſtill more ſo to one who compoſes

muſic. A blockhead, drunk with mortal port, might have drawled out ſuch a pitiful ſtrain as *God ſave our noble King*,—or *To Arms*, and *Britons ſtrike Home*; but he muſt have had taſte and genius who compoſed *Joy to great Cæſar*, or even *The Early Horn*.

Except HANDEL's Oratorio one ſeldom goes to a muſical entertainment where the great bulk of the pieces is not inſipid. They have plenty of good muſic, but the performers are moſt provokingly frugal of the beſt. The reaſon I plainly take to be this: almoſt every ſcraper upon the violin has perhaps compoſed more or leſs muſick himſelf; and, inſtead of the works of the great maſters, they entertain you with their own. If reading was a public entertainment; if authors were the only readers, and the choice were left to them, I ſuppoſe the great writers of former ages would ſoon be forgotten.

It is a queſtion with me, whether the muſic of a country is to be performed any more than its language pronounced to perfection, but by thoſe that have been young in it; or, what comes nearly

nearly to the ſame thing, have been taught it young by a native of that country.

People of the fineſt ear very often have not the leaſt turn to mimickry: while, on the contrary, ſome of the beſt mimicks are miſ-tuned, and have not the leaſt ear to harmony.

It is impoſſible to make ſuch a definition of wit as ſhall comprehend every kind of it. But it ſeems to conſiſt chiefly in a happy faculty of comparing * diſtant objects, and ſurpriſing you with the diſcovery of a ſtriking reſemblance where you did not dream of finding any.

The wit of ſome, who have a large ſhare of it, is too much of one kind, and proves cloying for want of variety.

An author, who affects to be fine in every thing he ſays, and to write above his ſubject, is juſt as

* In ſome ingenious eſſays, which appeared a few years ago in one of the daily papers, wit was called *a tall faculty of the mind.* There is ſomething odd in the expreſſion, but the meaning is good.

ridiculous a coxcomb as he who performs the most indifferent actions with a ſtudied grace. And this affectation is one principal cauſe of the awkward unnatural language, which prevails in moſt of our modern tragedies.

Mr. *Voltaire* obſerves very juſtly of ſome authors, that they have done themſelves no good by endeavouring to be univerſal. It is a fooliſh enough piece of vanity to be ſure; for it requires no great genius to write a ſpiritleſs ode, an affected epiſtle, an inſipid ſatire, a flat comedy, a cold tragedy, and even a flimſy, foppiſh, unintereſting epic poem. SHAKESPEAR perhaps poſſeſſed the greateſt compaſs of genius that ever man did, and could excel in every thing, from the nobleſt ſublime down to the burleſque.

'In ſome ages the few people of genius ought to publiſh juſt enough to ſhew what they could have done in better times: more is not worth their while.

If there wants any thing beſides the applauſe of the beſt judges to eſtabliſh the reputation of your performance,

performance, it is the diſlike of the worſt. For falſe taſte, whatever it may pretend, though it may even impoſe upon itſelf, at its heart naturally hates true genius.

I have heard talk of an ITALIAN who thought the ſoldier in VANDYKE's BELISARIUS ſomething quite wonderful from a FLEMISH painter. It would ſeem he had never heard of one RUBENS, a native of FLANDERS, who, *take him for all in all*, weigh him in the niceſt *ballance*, is perhaps inferior to few painters that ITALY has produced. True taſte is always candid, and naturally delights in true genius, without ever enquiring from what ſoil it ſprung.

I have been told, that ſome *French Abbé*, whoſe name I forget, pronounces, with a very deciſive air, that SHAKESPEAR underſtood all the paſſions but *love*.—Good God!—SHAKESPEAR not underſtand *love!*—Who does then?—VOLTAIRE?

Love, anger, grief, all the paſſions are contagious.

Love is the cauſe of more indiſcretions in old people perhaps than in young.

Dr. Swift ſays, that no wiſe man ever wiſhed himſelf younger. The dean might perhaps have excepted a man renowned for wiſdom, who ſeems to have been gloomy and unhappy in his latter years merely for want of youth.

Died by the ſting of a ſnail would ſound oddly in the bills of mortality. Yet I have known a woman of beauty, ſenſe, and ſpirit, in love with one of the moſt inſipid fellows that ever glared weary ſtupidity from a large dead eye. Whence it appears, that the infatuation of queen Mab in the *Midſummer Night's Dream*, however extravagant it ſeems, is not quite out of nature.

As there have been many *ſmall* obſervations made upon *great* claſſics, I muſt take the liberty to venture one. *Iago* ends his deſcription of a good woman with

She was a wight, if ever ſuch there were—

Here he ſtops, and *Deſdemona* aſks, *To do what?* It does not appear what leads her to this queſtion, except

except you add a little word, which ſeems to have dropt out of its place here without being miſſed.—Suppoſe it was to be read thus:

She was a wight, if ever ſuch there were,
To—

Here the buffoon pauſes, to draw the lady into the queſtion, which it is now natural for her to make; and to give, what he is ready to add, its full effect of ſurpriſing and diſappointing archly.

Iago. *She that was ever fair, and never proud,*
Had wit at will, and yet was never loud; &c.
— — —
She was a wight, if ever ſuch there were,
To—
Deſd. *To do what?—*
Iago. *To ſuckle fools, and chronicle ſmall-beer.*

Why do the players, in the part of Richard the Third, always ſay, *Give me a horſe.* It not only ſounds much better, but the meaning is, in my opinion, more warm and ſpirited as it ſtands in Shakeſpear.

Give me another horſe—Bind up my wounds—

As I feel it, there is a kind of tame impropriety, or even abſurdity, in that action of HAMLET where

where he pulls out the two miniatures of his father and uncle. It ſeems more natural to ſuppoſe, that HAMLET was ſtruck with the compariſon he makes between the two brothers, upon caſting his eyes on their pictures, as they hang up in the apartment where this conference paſſes with the queen. There is not only more nature, more elegance, and dignity in ſuppoſing it thus; but it gives occaſion to more paſſionate and more graceful action, and is of conſequence likelier to be as SHAKESPEAR's imagination had conceived it.

But I beg pardon for theſe trifles: and, in hopes that you may not all be ſo ill-natured as to take me at my word, ſhall conclude with a ſcrap of Latin that has, like many others, led a weary life; though it is almoſt as inſipid a thing of the kind as ever came upon the town —

Nos hæc novimus eſſe nihil.

Which, in plain Engliſh, means no more than that, *I am ſenſible all theſe* SKETCHES *and* SENTENCES *are mere nothing.*

ERRATUM.

The running-title of the foregoing Eſſays ſhould have been SKETCHES OR ESSAYS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

SKETCHES:

OR

ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, Esq.

THE SECOND VOLUME.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

SKETCHES:

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VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

OF BUSINESS.

I SHOULD take the moſt natural and agreeable life to conſiſt in a well-proportioned mixture of buſineſs, amuſement, and pleaſure. A life of mere diſſipation and pleaſure muſt be expoſed to many weary, tedious, inſipid hours; and haunted with reflections mortifying to an ingenuous mind. A little buſineſs is neceſſary to keep off the languor which attends idleneſs, and to prepare you for enjoying the hours of indulgence with a proper quickneſs of appetite. Unhappy the man who is obliged to live by the buſineſs to which he has taken an averſion: though perhaps not more miſerable than ſome independent people, who, having

having nothing to do, have neither taſte nor genius to fill up their time agreeably.

A keen turn to amuſement and to the common drudging buſineſs of the world, I believe ſeldom meet in the ſame perſon. A ſtrong diſpoſition to ſelfiſh induſtry, obtuſe ſenſations, (which are ſeldom unattended with a proper ſhare of confidence) and a moderate degree of diſcretion and judgment, are ſufficient, with the help of a very ſlight education, to qualify almoſt any man to ſucceed in any buſineſs. And it is evident, from numberleſs inſtances, that a man may arrive at the higheſt ſtation in ſome of the moſt ingenious profeſſions, by juſt the ſame kind of talents and arts as make an eminent taylor or a ſtay-maker.

OF LUCK.

THAT ſenſible, or at leaſt that plauſible, old ſaying, *Quiſquis ſuæ fortunæ faber eſt*, which in plain Engliſh means that *every man is the carpenter or bricklayer of his own fortune*, is not to be admitted without a great many exceptions; for luck, good or bad, will every now and then be meddling,

meddling, in what regards the proſperity of ſuch *reptiles*, ſuch *vile worms*, as ſome humble philoſophers are pleaſed to reckon the race of human kind.

Fortuna favet fortibus — fortune favours the brave, ſays another. A third ſays, *Fortuna favet fatuis — fortune favours fools*. This laſt obſervation ſeems to have more examples in its favour than both the other two. For fools and weak people, they ſay, are generally remarkable for good luck. But though fortune interferes ever ſo evidently in their favour, few of them have the generoſity or gratitude to own it; aſcribing, or what ought rather to be called imputing, their ſucceſs entirely to their own ſuperior merit.

OF LARGE SOCIETIES.

WHEN a great number of weak heads and bad hearts are collected into a maſs, they muſt naturally improve in vice and folly; and very faſt too, if they are not kept in order by a wiſe diſcipline. It was probably from this conſideration amongſt others, that in former times, a prince celebrated

celebrated for wiſdom, thought it an object of the utmoſt conſequence to a whole kingdom, to put a ſtop at once to the further growth of its capital. In a very populous and over-grown city, eſpecially if it happens to be the ſeat of an extenſive commerce, great multitudes of people, without either education or good natural ſenſe, muſt grow rich. Theſe, in all popular diſſentions, will generally throw their weight into the wrong ſcale; will join the clamour againſt the moſt ſalutary meaſures; raving for things unreaſonable, impracticable, and what, with better eyes, they would often ſee detrimental and pernicious to themſelves. Yet ſuch heads as theſe lead the reſt of the nation, who conſider them as their true and incorrupted ſource of political intelligence; their vigilant guardians, their ſafe protectors; the ſoundeſt, ableſt, and moſt diſintereſted judges of whatever belongs to the management of national affairs.—God knows to what a contemptible degree they are miſtaken!—For there is nothing more true, than that the inhabitants of a certain metropolis are, in general, not only the moſt brutal, indecent, and immoral, but the moſt ſtupid and ignorant, of the whole people throughout the kingdom.

Oh!—to any one who feels for the honour and dignity of England, what a ſubject of ſhame and mortification it muſt be, that the bad manners of thoſe who inhabit the capital, expoſe the whole nation to the contempt of all foreigners!—Oh! good God! to the contempt of all Europe; who muſt naturally form an unjuſt opinion of the more civilized and more ſenſible people in all the moſt diſtant corners of the kingdom, from what paſſes *here*. Where the maſter of the houſe is a clown, the whole family partakes in his diſgrace; and is even apt to be infected by him. Pray don't call the people of this Town *Engliſhmen*—For the honour of *England*, call them *Londoners* for ever—The yeſty dregs of Great-Britain and Ireland, the frothy ſcum of every nation in Europe, of every province in America, fermenting with the * *Gowk ſpittle* of Jamaica, is their compoſition. Such *Engliſhmen* as theſe *Londoners*—good heaven!—are the only real enemies of *England*; which never can be ruined, but by their ſtupidity, their abſurdity, their

* This is the name by which the country people in Scotland call the white frothy ſubſtance, the neſt, in which the gnats eggs are hatched amongſt the branches of the ſorrel and other plants.—*Gowk* is their common word for the *Cuckoo*.

madneſs and villainy.—In this bleſſed meridian of LIBERTY, the French proteſtants too; whoſe fathers, within the memory of ſome that are yet alive, fled hither for ſhelter from an inhuman perſecution; are become, of a moſt humble colony of ſuppliants, a gang of profligate ruffians, that madly and ungratefully rebel againſt a government, to which they owed their protection then, and do to this day. In their own original country, the wheel, inſtead of the gallows, would long ago have put an end to *their* turbulence.

VOX POPULI VOX DEI.

THIS ſentence muſt have been firſt roared out by an impudent leader of ſome villainous faction: and it is ſurprizing that even the implicit indolence of ſenſible people ſhould, to this day, have permitted it to paſs without the leaſt examination.—What?—*The cry of the ſtupid, ignorant, profane populace, who conſtitute the great majority of mankind, the voice of God!*—Heaven preſerve us!—But this horrible blaſphemy has been ſo long familiar to our ears, that we hear it without ſhuddering, and even acquieſce in it. If thoſe blind gentry are ever in the right, it muſt be by chance, and

and they have only ſtumbled upon it. The tools of knaves muſt always be in the wrong; and even when left to themſelves, the multitude hardly ever fail to be miſtaken.

For inſtance, of all thoſe who have, in almoſt every various denomination, from time to time, become favourites with the vulgar here, great and ſmall, within this preſent century, how few will be remembered in the next, except with contempt and infamy!—Of thoſe idols, from the moſt exalted ſtations downward to the meaneſt; from the monarch's palace down to the tradeſman's kitchen, how few have not already ſurvived their falſe renown, rotted alive, and diſcovered their deformities naked enough to be perceived by the blindeſt populace that ever diſgraced human nature! who at the ſame time, are never, by any experience, any diſappointments, or the moſt flagrant diſcoveries, to be cured of their natural propenſity to this abſurd and fatal idolatry. This ſtupid idolatry is indeed the only religion that now remains to them. Yet, void as they are both of religion and morals, any cunning impudent knave might ſo operate upon their ſtupidity and ignorance, as to throw them all into a holy ferment again, by ſcreaming out that *the church is in danger*.

OF THE PRESS.

THE liberty of the preſs is gone, was not long ago wantonly bawled out every night and morning from the lurking holes of Grubſtreet, from the Fleet, the King's-bench, the Marſhalſea, and perhaps from Newgate itſelf, by a parcel of factious ſcribblers; who, at the ſame time, were weekly and daily flinging about ſuch indecent abuſe, and ſuch impudent pernicious lies, as no wiſe government, except the preſent, in any country, or in any age, would, for its own dignity, or the peace, harmony, and happineſs of ſociety, have ſuffered. That the liberty of the preſs is gone, was, indeed, too true, at the time when this impudent diſingenuous complaint was the moſt clamorous — But how? and in what ſenſe? —The daily and weekly conveyers of political intelligence, had, for a long time, almoſt univerſally, as I am told, ſhut up their *channels* to truth and common ſenſe; at leaſt they ſeldom ſuffered any thing of that kind to paſs. They conveyed nothing almoſt but impudent lies, nonſenſe, and villainy; which indeed is too much the caſe to this day.

I have

I have for a long time, in ſad earneſt, conſidered the art of printing as a moſt pernicious invention. It puts it in the power of every blockhead and ſcoundrel to propagate ſtupidity, brutality, bad morals, deceit, and impoſture, throughout the land. In ſhort, the preſent indecency and licentiouſneſs of the preſs, moſt evidently tends to the aboliſhing of its liberty; and that of the whole nation.

OF THE POOR.

IN any country, opulent or not, it is a diſgrace to government, that any one, who dares to claim its protection, ſhould ever periſh for want of neceſſaries. There ought to be no diſtreſs from want. Employ the poor that are able to work; ſupply the infirm and ſuperannuated with a comfortable ſubſiſtence. The greateſt miſeries of life are often not to be cured, not even to be ſoothed, by all the advantages of wealth. And what a ſhameful inhuman crime it is to neglect thoſe to which a wiſe police could always apply an infallible remedy!

I ſay again, there ought to be no diſtreſs from want. Employ your poor that are able to work.—

But we cannot oblige a *free-born Briton* to work, if he is ever ſo poor—God forbid!—But why?—You can confine this ſon of freedom in a naſty goal for a trifling debt; you can ſend him to Tyburn for a pitiful theft; and yet you cannot oblige him to make himſelf happy, by earning a comfortable livelihood in the way of honeſt induſtry—Very true—for, as a *free Briton*, the pooreſt man is ſtill his own maſter.—You mean, he has a right to make himſelf extremely miſerable—But what right has he to recline himſelf an uſeleſs burden upon ſociety? You'll ſay that ſociety may leave him to ſtarve; as it often does. But what's the good of that? The miſerable wretch goes to the dogs; and ſociety loſes a hand that might have been of ſome uſe.—Pray why do you ſend your boys to ſchool?—Why, ſurely to learn to read and write, and qualify themſelves for buſineſs, in one ſhape or another.—Would not they rather paſs their time in play, d'ye think?—I ſuppoſe they would; but their maſters won't ſuffer them to be idle.—Well, thoſe idle fools we talk of are always children; and ought to be ſubmitted to any authority, that kindly obliges them to be buſy for their own happineſs.

In

In a neighbouring country, whoſe plan of police is, perhaps, the moſt perfect that ever human wiſdom contrived, and the beſt executed; the pooreſt creature that can work is not ſuffered to be idle; the pooreſt creature that cannot work is not left to ſtarve.

AN ANECDOTE.

I AM naturally fond of ſtrangers; and, where all other circumſtances are equal, ſhould find myſelf diſpoſed to pay them more or leſs attention in proportion to their diſtance from home. Where all things elſe are equal, in performing any little duties of benevolence within my power, I ſhould prefer a German to a Hollander or a Frenchman; a Greek, a Ruſſian, or a Turk, to a German; a Perſian to a Turk; and ſo on to the utmoſt limits of the Eaſt.—Of all the people upon earth, the Aſiatics appear to me the moſt amiable, noble, and generous: they ſeem the moſt poſſeſſed with that virtuous heroic enthuſiaſm, which exalts human nature to its higheſt degree of ſublimity. One late well-atteſted inſtance of their generous humanity, may perhaps not be too tireſome to the im-

patient reader. The gentleman is but lately dead who favoured me with the following relation of a fact which deſerves to be more generally known; and I give it in his own words:

In the year 1730, the Prince George, captain Croſs, from Bengal and Surat to Canton, was drove into Juncum bay, on the coaſt of China, in a hard gale of wind; of ſuch force as to make the ſupercargoes, Meſſrs. Stephenſon and Harriſon, with Mr. Alex. Wedderburn, purſer, go aſhore in the pinnace, in order to get a pilot, and ſuch other help as their diſtreſs then required. The wind all that night blowing fiercer, next morning they were told the ſhip was loſt, which they ſoon perceived to be too true. The mandarine of that diſtrict immediately ordered, that the fore-mentioned gentlemen, with Mr. Barlow, fourth mate, who then acted as coxſwain of the pinnace, and the Laſcars, ſhould be provided with lodgings and all proper accommodations; and that every part of the wreck, and all the goods that could be ſaved, ſhould be carefully gathered together, and put into a ſecure place for them; all which was faithfully performed. The generous mandarine's humanity

humanity did not end here; for he ordered a preſent of 350 tale* to Mr. Stephenſon, 300 to Mr. Harriſon, 250 to Mr. Wedderburn, 200 to Mr. Barlow, and to each Laſcar as much as was reckoned equal to their full wages, had the voyage been performed in the uſual time: and, at their departure, gave them an order, from the court of Pekin, for carriages, lodgings, and proviſions, through every diſtrict in their way to Canton.

One would be glad to know, upon what Chriſtian ſhore any ſhip-wreck'd crew could have met with ſuch humane and generous treatment. What ſtill the more heightens the merit of this noble behaviour, it is well known that the Chineſe are not at all fond of trading with the Europeans; and it is probable enough, that ſome other eaſtern nations may, in time, become as ſhy of them, from experience, as the ſagacious Chineſe have always been from theory and ſpeculation.

As generous deeds do not appear every day, even in the moſt ſenſible, the moſt virtuous, and

* Three tale are equal in value to one pound ſterling.

moſt

moſt magnificent of all poſſible ages; there is room here to pay ſome proper reſpect to a late act of humanity in the preſent Emperor of Morocco; which the following extract from his letter to the grand Maſter of Malta will explain:

"In the name of God, the ſole Almighty. To the Prince of Malta, Grand-Maſter of the Religion of St. John, and to all his Council, the Emperor of Morocco, Fez, Mequinez, &c. wiſhes health and proſperity. In compaſſion of ſeveral Tuſcan ſlaves, who have long been in my poſſeſſion, and have never yet been demanded of me, I ſend them all to be preſented to you by my ſecretary Abladi Salciti: by this means, procuring myſelf at once the double ſatisfaction of making you a preſent, and of reſtoring liberty to thoſe unfortunate people. If you had no captives of ours in your poſſeſſion, I ſhould deſire nothing of you in return; but as I know you have, I ſhall with great pleaſure receive ſuch as you may be pleaſed to ſend me."

Along with this letter the Emperor ſent thirty-ſeven Chriſtian ſlaves; and that the Grand-Maſter of

of Malta returned exactly the ſame number of Mahometan captives, muſt have been owing to his having had no more.

OF FABLE AND HISTORY.

FOR want of intelligence, or candour, or perhaps of both, there is often too great a mixture of fable in hiſtory. On the other hand, it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that there is more true hiſtory amongſt the fables of the ancient poets than we generally imagine. And to compare the hiſtorian with the poet, the latter ſeems not only the moſt entertaining, but the moſt inſtructive, the moſt ingenuous, and moſt honeſt of the two; as he does not even expect your belief of every great and wonderful event or action he relates. The mixture of evident undiſguiſed improbabilities, and what the critics I think call the *marvellous* in Homer, has, in too great a meaſure, weakened his credit as an hiſtorian. Though even in this capacity he has, perhaps, ſhewn himſelf much ſuperior, in candour and impartiality, to many at leaſt of our modern hiſtory-writers. In ſupport of this obſervation, I can hardly think it neceſſary to

take notice, that he has in general repreſented more worthy, amiable, and heroic characters, amongſt the Trojan heroes, than in thoſe of his own country.

His commentators, I am told, have here and there been ſtruck with ſome glimpſes of true hiſtory in the Iliad and the Odyſſey. And indeed I ſhould imagine, that his narration in each of thoſe poems was built upon ſolid facts; enlivened with fable only to make it the more entertaining and wonderful; and, with the heightening of every ornament, to exalt an hiſtory into a poem. One particular circumſtance, which I don't know that any of thoſe commentators has obſerved in this light, ſeems ſtrongly to favour ſuch a conjecture. The hero of the Odyſſey, after having, with great bravery and addreſs, demoliſhed the profligate ſuitors, puts the poor female attendants, who might have been paſſively concerned in the riots of his houſe, upon the ſhocking office of removing the bodies of their ſlaughtered lovers: and as ſoon as they have, by his orders, ſwabbed the bloody hall, he hangs them all up in a ſtring againſt the wall of the court. Homer could never

have *made* the hero of his poem guilty of ſuch an indecent unmanly piece of cruelty; but found himſelf obliged, by his attachment to true hiſtory, to record it as a real atchievement of the * *hard-hearted Ulyſſes*.

THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

HISTORY is, in general, an uncomfortable fatiguing journey through a flat inſipid country; a tale too long for human patience. And after all, for want of intelligence and candour in the writers of hiſtory, you can ſeldom truſt to its veracity. What different accounts are given of events that have happened even in our own times!—For my part, I find myſelf much diſpoſed to be an infidel as to many diſputed points of hiſtory. A battle is an *affair* of ſuch confuſion, that few, even of thoſe who have been concerned in it, can explain its circumſtances, or fairly recollect them. It is ſometimes as much as you can do to diſcover which army gained the victory. But what is yet more ſurprizing, it has happened, that ſome very conſpicuous characters in hiſtory have been ſo falſly repreſented, that the moſt worthleſs

* *Durus Ulyſſes.*

worthleſs and contemptible continue to be regarded with admiration; while the beſt and the moſt amiable are conſidered with deteſtation and abhorrence.

A lively ſpirited relation of a formidable conſpiracy, an important revolution, or any other intereſting event, may afford a very agreeable entertainment. But human life is too ſhort; and it requires all the phlegmatic patience of a well-feed lawyer; to attend to a long, drawling, inſipid ſtory, if it was ever ſo true.—Livy is far from being a heavy, loitering, dozing ſtory-teller. His ſubject is enriched with a great variety of entertaining events. Notwithſtanding his extravagant profuſion of coxcomical ornaments, in very good ſpeeches made by himſelf for people who never ſpoke them, he diſpatches the affairs of a prodigious empire, throughout a whole century of perpetual action, in much leſs than half the number of pages that one inſignificant reign of a king of France, or of England, has coſt to ſome laborious compilers. And yet, for all the ſpirit, elegance, and dignity of his narration, perhaps there are not many now alive who have had perſeverance enough

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to attend the great Latin hiſtorian to the end of his tale; even ſhortened as it is by the injuries of chance and time.

So much for hiſtory as an amuſement. As to its uſe towards qualifying a ſtateſman for the management of public affairs, I take it to be very inconſiderable. A general acquaintance with the hiſtory of his own country is perhaps enough for a *prime miniſter*; and ſome, I am told, have made a tolerable ſhift to ſtumble on for many years without even that. With a proper ſhare of ſagacity, reſolution, activity, and addreſs, an honeſt ſtateſman might, in the moſt troubleſome times, do great things for his country; though he had never turned over one leaf of either Livy, Tacitus, or Salluſt. Mean time, alluſions and references to ancient hiſtory have long been ſucceſsfully employed to give ſome credit, with an air of conſequence and dignity, to the deluſive lucubrations of your ſtate empirics, and their venal journey-men. And this ſeems to be the only advantage which our ſtateſmen have ever yet drawn from the ſtudy of hiſtory.

OF FAME.

THERE is as much variety of taſte in this capital article of happineſs, as in any thing elſe. For there are multitudes who would be aſhamed of a virtuous renown, and proud of what they would think a glorious villainy. An inhuman, diſſolute, abandoned villain, will naturally admire the character of a Tiberius, a Nero, or a Domitian; and perhaps, without much affectation, deſpiſe that of a Titus or a Trajan.

If you are not perfectly indifferent as to the good opinion of the mob, you are one of them yourſelf. *Their* opinion, as far as all politic views are out of the queſtion, is much below the conſideration of every man who has any tolerable ſhare of underſtanding. But he who is above the opinion of the better and more ſenſible part of mankind; he who does not regard it with the utmoſt reverence; is moſt certainly capable of every thing that is baſe and villainous.

OF REVENGE.

THE gratification of this paſſion in the hands of a ſenſible man, a perſon of moderation and humanity, will hardly ever, in cold blood, exceed the bounds of an exact retaliation. So far I ſhould reckon it juſt, and a proper ſupplement to the laws; which afford no redreſs in many caſes of the moſt inſupportable injuſtice. I could perhaps forgive an act of villainy which is not cognizable by the laws—but I don't chuſe it—it is againſt my principles—it is weak, impolitic, and abſurd.—In ſuch caſes you have nothing but the fearful apprehenſions of your own reſentment, to keep raſcals in awe.

Every act of juſt vengeance is *a terror to evil doers*; and contributes ſomewhat to the ſafety of honeſt and inoffenſive people:—perhaps it might even to the ſtability of government; if it ſhould ever become ſo deſpicably weak, ſo tottering and paralytic, as tamely to bear the inſults of an abandoned, ſtupid, cowardly populace.

OF BLASPHEMY.

THERE is a ſet of vain crazy mortals, I was going to ſay half-witted fellows, but that would be too great a compliment: fools, that attempt to ſhine by talking blaſphemy.—Good God! —it would be a ſmall triumph to outſhine all thoſe geniuſes in that ſtile.—I fear the thunder at leaſt as little as any of thoſe indecent reprobates; but I cannot be ſo ſtupidly ungrateful, as to inſult the adorable author of my being and all the pleaſures of my life. There ſurely needs very little wit to ridicule the ideal God of the vulgar; who conceive the ſtupenduous Creator of the univerſe; the Almighty Spirit, who has produced every thing that is good, great, and beautiful; to be a teſty, ill-natured old man, with a long beard.

After all, to give the devil his due; a knave, who is always at bottom a fool, as indeed moſt of us are, is of all animals the leaſt unpardonable for complaining of his Maker.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

WHAT we call Evil, as well as every thing that is good, moſt certainly ſprung from the great fountain of all exiſtence. Heaven, which gave us corn, wine, and oil, ſent us alſo war, famine, and peſtilence. The moſt pernicious things have their uſes; and the rankeſt poiſons, ſkilfully managed, prove the moſt powerful medicines.

In moral life, a perfect character would be a monſter; at leaſt I ſhould hardly chuſe the ſociety of a man who was above all human weakneſſes. The amiable medium of virtue, to the beſt of my apprehenſion, lies between a rigid, ſevere, minute, exact, over-ſcrupulous ſanctity, and a diſſolute profligacy. It avoids the one, as diſagreeable, uncomfortable, and forbidding; the other, as indecent, ſhocking, and contemptible.

I humbly conceive, that there cannot be much pleaſure in a ſtate that is not, in one ſhape or another, obnoxious to pain; and that none, but

the Almighty himſelf, can enjoy an uninterrupted and immutable happineſs. The heathen elyſium has nothing to recommend it but eaſe and tranquility; green fields and ſerene weather; which one would wiſh ſometimes to change for a ſtorm. The happy heroes there are a parcel of mere lowngers; inſipid murderers of time; or rather, uſeleſs trifling waſters of eternity. It is difficult to imagine any thing ſo tireſome as their condition.—The Mahometan paradiſe is flattering indeed as to one article of pleaſure;—but that is hardly enough—For even love itſelf may, once in forty or fifty years, ſigh for a truce of a few hours; at leaſt for a little variety. Without variety, life is inſipid in this world: and the happieſt ſituation in the next may poſſibly enough be ſomewhat expoſed to diſagreeable rubs; that it may not ſink into a ſtate of inſipid diſſipation, or ſupine inactivity.—You all know what horrible riots and combuſtions broke out in heaven at the time that old Satan, or his Sulphureous Highneſs (according to the title with which he has lately been dignified by a pulpit orator) loſt his wits, and rebelled againſt almighty power.—What ſquabbles may have happened there ſince, heaven only knows; as all hiſtorical intelligence from thence

thence has been ſhut up ever ſince the ceſſation of inſpired writing.

In ſhort, the Chriſtian *Hades*, with a tolerable mixture of variety, would be a more eligible ſituation, than either the heathen Elyſium, or the Paradiſe of Mahomet. To fry for ever under the dog-days muſt be horrible. But with a reaſonable variety of cool air, freſh ſpring-water, iced cream, plenty of good Rheniſh, Old-hock, Moſelle, Cyder, Burgundy, and ſome other comfortable things, one might make a tolerable ſhift *there*; or even in *Jamaica* itſelf.

But to be very ſerious; without a certain mixture of what we call Evil, the beautiful and entertaining variety which the almighty Creator exhibits both in the natural and moral world, muſt have been imperfect. If this mixture was not neceſſary to the beauty and perfection of nature, it muſt have been unavoidable. For it is beyond the power of God himſelf to perform things naturally impoſſible. There are numberleſs things, both in the natural and moral world, which no more depend upon the will of God, than

that two and two make four; or that a ſphere is more capacious than any other figure under the ſame extent of ſurface. A proportionable ſenſibility of pain, muſt, I ſuppoſe, unavoidably attend that of pleaſure. God Almighty has given you ſenſe enough to take care of yourſelf; but, to be perfectly ſecured from burning or drowning, you muſt have a world without either fire or water.

To conclude; if *the ways of God to man* needed any *vindication*, why may we not preſume that, ſuppoſing a mixture of *real* evil to be unavoidable, the Almighty ſhould chuſe to admit ſome evil rather than that there ſhould be no good; to expoſe his creatures to ſome chance of pain and miſery, rather than that there ſhould be no creation; rather than that infinite ſpace, the ſcene of his ſtupenduouſly magnificent and moſt beautiful works, ſhould for ever remain waſte, empty, and deſolate?

OF FASCINATION.

THE language of the eyes is ſo expreſſive, as to be underſtood at the firſt glance. But the art by which the rattle-ſnake, and others of the ſerpent family, can ogle a hare into their formidable jaws, or,

Drink from the midſt of heaven the ill-pois'd lark,

might deſerve ſome conſideration. Some honeſt ſenſible naturaliſts appear confident of the fact. For my part, though I have never yet ſeen it, ſtrange as it is, I have no right to ſay it is impoſſible.—I can conceive a man in ſuch a ſtate of mind and circumſtances as to find himſelf tempted to do the very thing that would give him the utmoſt horror. That moſt unhappy madman *Caligula*, they ſay, would often tell *Cæſonia*, of whom he was ſo paſſionately fond, *How eaſily could I ſtrike off this charming head of thine!*

I recollect upon this occaſion, ſome lines in a poet, who of all mankind had the moſt intimate acquaintance with human nature—

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er its base into the sea—

The very place puts Toys of desperation
Without more motive *into every brain,*
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

If I remember right, *Montagne*, who does not seem to have been of a melancholy complexion, somewhere says, that when he found himself upon the top of some hideous precipice in his mountainous neighbourhood, he had often felt an impulse to leap down. The shocking fate of a young lady; who, according to report, within these two or three years, while she was observing the dreadful figure of a large shark, slipt out of the cabin-window into the sea, might possibly enough have been owing to some desperate impulse of this kind.

As one would do any thing reasonable to rescue the memory of a great man from unjust reproach; think it impossible that *Empedocles* could have been

been so very weak, as by a fly slip out of this world, either to hope or wish to pass for one of *the immortal gods*. — The hollow surface might have failed him; he might have slipt in by the mere chance of an unlucky step; he might have been suffocated by the sulphureous steam; or, on the brink of the burning gulph, he might naturally enough have grown giddy; or have been seized with such *Toys of desperation* as *Shakespear* talks of.—But neither envy, malice, nor jealousy, have the least acquaintance with generosity or candour.

THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE UPON GENIUS.

THERE are people so bigoted to some particular theory, to false opinions and prejudices, as indolently to surrender even their own sensations to them. There are in this island some renegadoes absurd enough to tell you, that Britain lies at too great a distance from the sun to produce any genius. It is really paying too much attention to such tastless, ignorant, superficial connoisseurs, to ask them, what country in Europe, what cli-

mate the neareſt to the ſun, has diſplayed a richer bloom of genius, in almoſt any department, than has ſpontaneouſly ſprung up in this foggy iſland; without even any kind foſtering influences from the ſuperiour powers—excepting thoſe alone of heaven and nature.—In what kind of genius is this iſland inferior to any nation under the ſun?—How many geniuſes has the happy climate of Italy produced, in any ſhape, ſince the days of Auguſtus?—The genial fruitful latitude of Greece has now lain quite fallow for near two thouſand years. Spain ſhould be aſhamed to boaſt of, or even to own her noble, generous, her delightful Cervantes, whom ſhe pitifully ſuffered to ſtarve.—But what great geniuſes has ever the warm climate of Africa produced? from the coaſt of Barbary to that of Guinea? from the mouth of the Nile to the Cape of Good-Hope?

There are perhaps only two arts in which this iſland yields to any climate, however near the ſun. It appears that the vaineſt Romans did not pretend to vie with the Greeks in ſtatuary. Yet, what artiſts in that way has modern Italy produced ſuperior, or even equal to thoſe of old Rome?—Very

few, I believe, and if it was not for Michael Angelo, perhaps one might venture to ſay none; tho' Italy, I ſuppoſe, lies as near the ſun as it did eighteen hundred years ago.—If the Engliſh have not hitherto excelled in painting, it may be imputed to circumſtances that need no explanation. But, notwithſtanding all the obſtacles to true genius in this iſland: it has, within theſe few years, loſt a painter of ſingular excellence; as natural and expreſſive, I'll venture to ſay it, in the comic and familiarly moral ſtyle, as Raphael was in the ſerious and ſublime. And you may wait many centuries before ſuch another flower blows in *any* climate. I reckon that ſtill, *even in this age*, our iſland may boaſt of ſeveral geniuſes, who, for inſtance, in portrait perhaps excel every painter in Europe, ſince the days of Vandyke: to whom unprejudiced poſterity may find them at leaſt equal; ſome perhaps ſuperior. We have ſome too who are admirable in landſkip.—But theſe geniuſes are ſtill alive; and ſome of them may be ſeen at a coffee-houſe, where they look much like other people. A hundred years hence, a connoiſſeur may probably enough wiſh to make a journey of a thouſand miles to ſee them; and would be glorioufly happy

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on his return home, to tell his neighbours he had ſhook them by the hand. As to hiſtory itſelf, beſides ſome promiſing ſpecimens of it at home, perhaps even this barren age has produced a genius, not indeed of Britiſh growth; unpatronized, and at preſent almoſt unknown; who may live to aſtoniſh, to terrify, and delight all Europe. But true genius is ſuch an uncommon production of nature, and is ſo much ſuperior to all quackiſh arts of recommending itſelf, that when it does appear, it is no wonder that a generation of people without taſte do not know it.

Genius may ſhoot up in a land quite inhoſpitable to it; it may perhaps even bloſſom in the moſt ungenial ſeaſon. But the roſe-buſh that diſplays its bluſhing honours in the face of the ſurly uncomfortable eaſt wind, muſt have ſprung from a root of no ſmall vigour. In a certain iſland, the foſtering indulgences and kind attention which the narciſſus, the gilly-flower, the tuberoſe, the Cape jeſſamin, and all the delicate flowers that adorn the garden, deſerve and require; are moſt abſurdly and perniciouſly beſtowed upon ragwort, jack of the hedge, prieſt's what d'ye call it, biſhops weed, bearsfoot, nightſhade, and henbane,

THE TASTE OF THE PRESENT AGE.

AMONGST many other diſtinguiſhing marks of a ſtupid age, a bad crop of men, I have been told that the taſte in writing was never ſo falſe as at preſent. If it is really ſo, it may perhaps be owing to a prodigious ſwarm of inſipid traſhy writers: amongſt whom there are ſome who pretend to dictate to the public as critics, though they hardly ever fail to be miſtaken. But their dogmatic impudence, and ſomething like a ſcientific air of talking the moſt palpable nonſenſe, impoſes upon great numbers of people, who really poſſeſs a conſiderable ſhare of natural Taſte; of which at the ſame time they are ſo little conſcious as to ſuffer themſelves paſſively to be miſled by thoſe blundering guides.

A Taſte worth cultivating is to be improved and preſerved by reading *only* the beſt writers. But whoever, after peruſing a ſatire of Horace, even in the dulleſt Engliſh tranſlation, can reliſh the ſtupid abuſe of a blackguard rhymſter, may

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as well indulge the natural depravity of his Taſte, and riot for life upon diſtiller's grains.

But the Taſte in writing is not, cannot be worſe, than it is in muſic, as well as in all theatrical entertainments. In architecture indeed there are ſome elegant and magnificent works ariſing, at a very proper time to reſtore the nation to ſome credit with its neighbours in this article; after its having been expoſed to ſuch repeated diſgraces by a triumvirate of awkward clumſey piles, that are not aſhamed to ſhew their ſtupid heads in the neighbourhood of Whitehall: and one more, that ought to be demoliſhed; if it was for no other reaſon but to reſtore the view of an elegant church, which has now for many years been buried alive behind the Manſion-houſe.

It is indeed ſome comfort, that while Taſte and Genius happen to be very falſe and impotent in moſt of the fine arts, they are not ſo in all. The arts of Gardening particularly, and the elegant plan of a farm, have of late years diſplayed themſelves in a few ſpots to greater advantage in England, than perhaps ever before in any part of Europe.

Europe. This is indeed very far from being univerſal; and ſome gardens, admired and celebrated ſtill, are ſo ſmoothly regular, ſo over-planted, and ſo crowded with affected, impertinent, ridiculous ornaments of temples, ruins, pyramids, obeliſks, ſtatues, and a thouſand other contemptible whims, that a continuation of the ſame ground in its rude natural ſtate, is infinitely more delightful. You muſt often have ſeen fine ſituations ruined with coſtly pretences to *improvement*. The moſt noble and romantic ſituation of any gardens I have ſeen, is near Chepſtow; and the gentleman who poſſeſſes that delightful ſpot, has ſhewn great judgment and a true taſte, in meddling ſo little with Nature where ſhe wanted ſo little help.

This is one happy inſtance of an admirable ſituation, where Nature is modeſtly and judiciouſly improved, not hurt, by art. An oppoſite inſtance of what art, ſkill, and taſte may produce, without any particular advantages of ground or ſituation, is moſt agreeably diſplayed in the royal gardens at Kew. There you find an extent of flat ground, ſo eaſily, agreeably, and unaffectedly broken, that you would think it impoſſible to alter

alter it but to the worſe. To paſs without any notice the agreeable and the elegant pieces of architecture, which without crowding adorn thoſe delightful gardens; perhaps there is not a phyſick garden in Europe where any botaniſt can be more agreeably entertained, as to the variety of curious plants. But there is ſomething new as far as I know, and particularly ingenious here in the diſpoſition and management of them. Thoſe that naturally delight in the rocks, and the dry hungry ſoil, are here planted upon ridges of artificial rock-work; where they ſhew all the luxuriance of vegetation that they could amongſt the Alps, the Pyrenees or the Andes. While a very different tribe, the Aquatics, diſplay themſelves in a large ciſtern, where they are conſtantly ſupplied with their beſt and moſt natural nouriſhment the rain water, conveyed to them from the eves of the richeſt greenhouſe I have ever ſeen.

OF THE DRAMATIC UNITIES.

I ſuppoſe few architects will deny that walls, doors, windows, a roof and chimneys, are neceſſary to a convenient habitation. In my opinion, a ſtrict adherence to the three Unities, as they are eſtabliſhed upon the firm foundation of good ſenſe, is not leſs neceſſary in the ſtructure of both Tragedy and Comedy; which otherways, eſpecially as repreſented upon the ſtage, are irregular, ſlovenly, blundering, abſurd and improbable. And that even *we* are not ſhocked at the daily treſpaſſes againſt them is owing to cuſtom and Shakeſpear. But it requires ſo much art to fill up five acts of a play with the buſineſs of one ſingle intereſting event; without one ſcene that is not neceſſary to forward it; without the leaſt change of place; and without exceeding the time of repreſentation; or even the compaſs of twelve hours, which is permitted by the courteſy of the critics; that it is no wonder moſt of our dramatic writers affect to deſpiſe rules ſo difficult to practiſe.

The three great French dramatic poets, Corneille, Racine and Moliere, have in this article been much

more successful than the English: amongst whom, if you except Johnson in three or four of his capital pieces, I am afraid we shall find very few who have built upon a regular plan; which is exactly the same thing to a play as composition is to a history in painting. Shakespear indeed without one perfect plan has perhaps excelled all other dramatic poets as to detached scenes. But he was a wonder!—His deep knowledge of human nature, his prodigious variety of fancy and invention, and of characters drawn with the strongest truest and most exquisite strokes, oblige you to forget his most violent irregularities. However, to compare two stupenduous geniuses in different departments; Shakespear for this mere disregard of plan appears less perfect than Raphael: who has heightened the truest and most masterly expressions in his various characters by the advantages of a composition the most august and superb imaginable where it was proper; and always the most elegant easy happy and natural.

The Samson Agonistes of Milton was it seems recommended by a celebrated prelate to Mr. Pope, as a performance that he might easily mould into a perfect

perfect model of Tragedy.—A moſt deſperate taſk!—For, beſides that the dialogue in Samſon is for the greateſt part dry, metaphyſical, pedantic, and reads like a ſtarched, laborious, ſlaviſh tranſlation from Euripides; I cannot help thinking, with all due deference to Milton and the B. of Rocheſter, that the Samſon Agoniſtes is no more to a Tragedy, than a long Farce of one act would be to a Comedy. For the ſtage, if I remember right, is never once cleared of the perſons introduced from the firſt ſcene to the laſt.

OF TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

NOtwithſtanding the opinion of ſome old critick, that a perfect tragedy is the nobleſt production of which the human wit is capable; it has long been a ſubject of learned diſpute, whether a perfect comedy was not the more difficult undertaking of the two. The great majority of judges, who are not always in the right, have I believe ſtill given the preference to comedy in this reſpect. They tell you that as comedy is a repreſentation of common life, and incidents that are expoſed to

daily obſervation, it muſt be a work of more difficult execution: Since moſt people truely are qualified to judge of what is natural in common life. But are we not equally judges of natural expreſſions in caſes of the moſt tragical diſtreſs? Even in the moſt exalted perſonages? What ſhould hinder?—Do the paſſions operate differently in ſimilar ſituations according to the different ranks of mankind? A King or an Emperor may upon occaſion be as much enraged as a chafed dray-man; only he'll expreſs his anger with more dignity and in more decent language.

It is, no doubt, equally the buſineſs of tragedy and comedy to repreſent life and characters naturally. And we have as good a right to expect true pictures of nature from the one as from the other.

Mean time, I imagine the working up of a good tragedy to be by many degrees the more difficult and arduous taſk of the two. Except you think the ſublime productions of Raphael required leſs genius than thoſe of Hogarth; whom I would never be underſtood to mention but in terms of great

great esteem and admiration.—How many tolerable comedies have we seen for one tragedy, in which the passions are naturally represented, and expresst with propriety and spirit? Mouthing, big words, turgid unnatural language, and affected sentiments, are nothing to the purpose; instead of moving the passions, they only create contempt and disgust in people of proper feelings. I would ask how many very good comic romances have appeared in the European languages for one tolerable epic poem? Let me ask, again, how many excellent comedians of both sexes have appeared upon the English stage within the memory of many now living, for one that has excelled in tragedy?

As to what Moliere says upon this subject, I think it is in his *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, it amounts to no more than this; that it is much easier to write a bad tragedy than a good comedy: which I suppose will be readily granted.

After all, I believe it must be allowed, that a loud ranting declamatory tragedy, in which nature is perpetually kept at the truncheon's end; with the assistance especially of magnificent dresses,

changes of amuſing ſcenes, altars, ſacrifices, proceſſions, public audiences of embaſſadors, and ſuch other mechanical ornaments as are eaſily introduced; is much more likely to impoſe upon the eyes and ears of the multitude than a cold inſipid comedy.

OF THE CARELESS HUSBAND.

AS the Careleſs Huſband, tho' it has not appeared upon the ſtage perhaps once theſe thirty years, ſtill poſſeſſes the firſt rank amongſt our modern comedies, in the opinion of many thouſands who have never either read it or ſeen it repreſented; I had ſome time ſince the curioſity to give it a ſecond peruſal; becauſe when I read it many years ago, I could not conceive how it came to be ſo particularly admired. And now, it does not by any means ſtrike me as the beſt even of the few modern Engliſh comedies with which I have any acquaintance. Sir Charles, the hero, the fine gentleman of the play, behaves rather brutally, and even with a needleſs, abſurd, cruelty to poor Edging; impertinent as ſhe is. What is ſtill worſe; in the tender ſcene between him and Lady Eaſy,

Eaſy, where all art and inſincerity ought to be generouſly thrown aſide, he is diſingenuous enough to make a merit of parting with a miſtreſs he was tired of, and from whom he had juſt diſengaged himſelf. That return of affection to a wife who was once become indifferent to him ſeems hardly natural, to a man at leaſt of Sir Charles's character; and L. Eaſy has no great reaſon to depend much upon it. As to L. Betty Modiſh; ſuch a flippant coquette does not promiſe at all to be a happy match, for ſuch an honeſt ſincere enamorato as L. Lovemore; but I hope he will never truſt her too long out of his ſight; not even with his friend and officious match-maker Sir Charles. In ſhort Sir Charles is no more than a mere man of pleaſure, of great indifference and *non chalance*; much ſuch another as Colley was himſelf. For I had the honour to be a little acquainted with Mr. Cibber; who beſides his abilities as a writer, and the ſingular variety of his powers as an actor, was to the laſt one of the moſt agreeable chearful and beſt humoured men you would ever wiſh to converſe with.—But to return to Sir Charles; the tenderneſs he expreſſes in the forementioned ſcene, ſhews a change of character too ſudden and too

violent to be natural; and is contrived only to ſerve a purpoſe in the play.

The ſudden change of character in Lady Townly in the Provoked Huſband, is not leſs unnatural than that of Sir Charles Eaſy.—I have good authority for it, that Sir John Vanbrugh, who left the play unfiniſhed, never intended any ſuch reformation. And of all the dramatic poets who have appeared in this century, Vanbrugh ſeems to have had the trueſt knowledge of human nature: If you except any, it can be none but Fielding; whoſe admirable Parody upon the modern Engliſh Tragedies might alone be ſufficient to procure him a high rank amongſt the Comic Poets.

OF GLOOMY WRITING.

I have read ſo little for many years upon any ſubject that did not immediately concern the political ſtate of the nation; of which every journeyman weaver, taylor, barber, every porter, chairman, coachman, drayman, carman, ſhoe cleaner and chimney ſweeper in London ought to make himſelf maſter, for the good and ſafety of the whole; that I am grown quite out of acquaintance with the delights of thoſe writers they call the

claſſics. But, to recollect ſome juvenile impreſſions, I uſed to think that in the works of the beſt poets, there is generally an air of chearfulneſs and gaiety; wherever their ſubject in any degree admits of it. The inferiour geniuſes are either inſipidly ſerene; or when they affect the ſerious and ſublime, it is heavy, gloomy and melancholy. Virgil is like the ſun, bright and chearful. Lucan is a ſubterraneous vault on fire; and when he wants to breathe the open air would be the Stygian lake in a ſtorm, if he could. There is ſuch a gloomy ſolemnity in moſt of the writers of that age, with whom I have ever had any acquaintance; that you would think the Sun had always waded through a ſky of blood in the days of thoſe inhuman Emperors.

OF A LINE IN LUCRETIUS.

IT cannot be leſs than thirty years ſince I have looked into Lucretius; and of the few lines in his elaborate poem that ſtick to my memory there is one,

Nempe aliæ quoque ſunt; nempe hac ſine viximus ante—

that if it was not for other lines and one particular anecdote, would almoſt tempt one to imagine

gine he had never been in love. What conſolation I beſeech you, can it give a lover dying of his wounds to tell him, *There are others as fair as ſhe; and you lived happily enough before you ever ſaw her.*—Very true. But this is mere ſophiſtry, and nothing at all to the purpoſe. For, ſays the intoxicated lover, I cannot live without this particular ſweet creature: of all the ſex, ſhe is the only one that can make me completely happy.—How ſoon, after poſſeſſing this bewitching angel, he may wiſh to get rid of her, is a queſtion not much to the purpoſe at preſent.

OF THE GOOSE-PHŒNIX.

THIS is perhaps one of the higheſt curioſities that has ever appeared even at court, either in bag-wig or tye. But as he is rather out of his place here, and deſerves a particular deſcription, I intend to exhibit him in my Natural Hiſtory, which I am preparing for the preſs, under the article of *Strange Birds.*

OF

OF SINGING.

TALKING of birds, pray how d'ye reliſh the Italian Singers? — Why really not ſo much as many *pretend* to do; a great many, a prodigious multitude of all ranks; who reſign their own ſenſations to other people, and dare neither *hear* nor *ſee* for themſelves; who dare not even *eat* or *drink* for themſelves. For my part, I am ſincere enough to own, that the Singers at the opera ſeldom give me much pleaſure; and leaſt of all while they are warbling out a note, to the length of a league. Beſides that I am in pain for their throats, I feel a contemptuous diſguſt, and a ſtrange diſagreeable ſenſation of ſhame both for them and the audience, who never fail to acknowledge thoſe flouriſhes with the loudeſt applauſe. But in almoſt all Singing, I cannot help lamenting what I think a moſt material imperfection. A ſweet tune, well ſung, gives a raviſhing grace even to lines, that when you come to read them you are ſurprized to find how flat and inſipid they are; and often how nonſenſical. What I complain of is, that few Singers pronounce the words

diſtinctly

distinctly enough to be understood. They might almost as well sing *Fal al de ral* for ever and ever.

I have reason to suspect, that the most exquisite powers in this way, for want of assurance in those who possess them, are sometimes lost; and remain quite unknown, except to a few of their most familiar friends. This diffidence is only to be regretted. But I can find no excuse for those volunteers in music, who have got that silly, impertinent, disgusting, provoking habit, of humming a tune to themselves in company, my dear honey: and at piquet, cribbage, or quadrille; even at *whist* itself, sing over their cards.

OF A VULGAR ERROR.

I Have always considered it as a self-evident absurdity, to imagine that the Scottish tunes were composed by an Italian fidler. But I own that my opinion upon this subject has begun to totter, ever since it was discovered that the real author of Ossian's Poems was one *Korah Sukkubbit*, Esq. an idle drunken fellow, who some ten or twelve thousand years ago, lived by making and mending

mending of Jews-harps at the borough of *Gomorrah*, in the county of *Paleſtine*.—Good God how provoking this is!—Bleſs your ears! the greateſt part of the Scotch, Welſh, and Iriſh tunes were compoſed long before the Italians, or even the Flemiſh knew any thing of muſic. Excepting *Corelli*, *Pergoleſi*, and perhaps one or two more diſtinguiſhable maſters of that charming art; the Italian compoſers have ſeldom aſpired at any thing beyond mere mechanical harmony; in which any one who has a tolerable ear may ſucceed. But to expreſs the paſſions is a different affair: it is one of the greateſt powers that belongs to true genius; which happens to be a very uncommon gift of Nature.

Handel was in general a noiſy overbearing bully in Muſic; ſometimes indeed, but not often, pathetic. —Yet ſtill charming, as far as mere harmony goes. But it was not in him, ſtill leſs in *David Rizzio*, a mere old fidler, who only executed what other people had compoſed, to have even imitated, with any ſucceſs, the Scottiſh tunes; whether melancholy or gay; whether amorous, martial, or paſtoral: in a ſtyle highly original, and moſt feelingly expreſſive of all the paſſions, from the ſweeteſt

to

to the moſt terrible.—Who was it that threw out thoſe dreadful wild expreſſions of diſtraction and melancholy in *Lady Culroſs's Dream?* an old compoſition, now I am afraid loſt, perhaps becauſe it was almoſt *too terrible for the ear.*—I'll venture to ſwear that *David Rizzio* was as innocent as any lamb of all ſuch frantic horrors.

OF SOME OTHER VULGAR ERRORS.

SOME people ſeem to wonder that *Stupidity and Malice* ſhould meet.—So far from being oppoſite qualities, they are, for the moſt part, huſband and wife. And why ſhould you attempt to ſeparate whom the Devil has joined?

Even of fools afraid.—Is this a juſt reproach? Pray what animal is ſo troubleſome or dangerous as a fool, whether he is your enemy or your friend?

Why are *Magnanimity and Meekneſs, Wit and Wiſdom,* ſuppoſed ſuch extraordinary combinations?—Good ſenſe is ſurely the ſolid foundation of true wit: and the trueſt magnanimity is above all the little turbulence of paſſion; which is ſometimes affected to diſguiſe fear.

A bad

A bad heart is by ſome people ſuppoſed almoſt inſeparable from an able head.—It is quite the contrary: for where the heart is falſe, the head is never found. A fool may be honeſt; but the moſt plauſible knave never yet poſſeſſed a ſound underſtanding. In a word, the leſs moral a man is, the nearer he approaches to an aſs.

Mere Vivacity is every day miſtaken for Wit: and moſt people, when you talk of a Wit, ſuppoſe it a vain, pert, briſk, impudent, ill-natured creature, that ſays ſuch things as would be pardonable only to an impertinent child. True Wit is ſeldom or never petulant: it would rather ſuppreſs even a good joke, than give the leaſt uneaſineſs to any perſon that is not a fair object of ſatire.

A ſerious diſpoſition and a reliſh of pleaſure, are reckoned oppoſite to one another by the generality of fools; who have not reflection enough to obſerve that the extaſies of pleaſure are of all things the moſt ſerious. This all ſenſible women know. The fools of the ſex, who are ſometimes as voluptuous as their betters, ſeem often to be out of this ſecret. But pray who is ſo grave, or

ſhews ſuch a ſolemn front as the huſband of the herd? — The wether is an inſipid whiffling fellow to the ram; whoſe dignified gravity abates, and becomes leſs diſtinguiſhable, as ſoon as the genial ſeaſon is over.—And I have been told by ſome ladies of very good ſenſe and conſiderable experience, that the grave rake is the man.

OF CIVILITY.

A Few days ago, upon accidentally opening an old book, I found the following reflection; "Incivility is not a vice of the ſoul, but the effect of many vices; of ridiculous vanity, of ignorance, idleneſs, ſtupidity, giddineſs, contempt of others, of ill nature, and jealouſy."

This I take to be a very juſt and true account of the various ingredients which compoſe Incivility.—As to Civility, if I am not miſtaken, it is an univerſal duty; all mankind have a natural claim to it from one another, and without it there can be no intercourſe in ſociety, but what is diſagreeable, ſhocking, brutiſh, and dangerous. Every good-natured generous-ſpirited perſon, will practiſe it for pleaſure; every ſenſible man, whether good-natured or not, for his own convenience and quiet.

SENTENCES,

MAXIMS,

AND

REVERIES.

SENTENCES, MAXIMS, AND REVERIES.

THERE are many degrees of madneſs on this ſide Bedlam—Thoſe too that ſtop ſhort of it, are by far the moſt dangerous kinds of inſanity; and it would be much happier for the public, as well as for many individuals, if ſome people were a little madder than they appear to be.

Moſt oddities, I apprehend, have a twang of madneſs in them; though they are often the exceſs of ſome good quality.

In education, it is perhaps proper and neceſſary for young people to be puſhed on to many hard and diſagreeable things; eſpecially as they are ſo

often unavoidable in life.—Had it depended upon one's own choice, who would have dared to have been born?—Good God! to be received into the world by a frightful old woman of either ſex—*Hercules* himſelf would have avoided it if he could.

What does a conſcience void of all *great offences* ſignify to one who torments himſelf for every little miſbehaviour, every inattention, of which, abſence, hurry, or a hypochondriacal fit of diffidence, may have made him guilty? For one trifling neglect in point of good manners, may give more pain of mind to a man of much ſenſibility, than all the horrible crimes of a moſt flagitious life ever gave to ſuch a profligate wretch as *Caſar Borgia*; whom I take to be the greateſt of all modern villains. For the preſent are ſtill out of the queſtion.

Catiline was but half a villain—He ſtrikes you only with horror. The compleat villain affects you at the ſame time with horror and contempt.

I for-

I forget whether it is a reflection of *Machiavel's* or ſome other political writer, that the ſtate or empire muſt go to ruin in a great hurry, whoſe affairs are conducted by ſuch people as in low life muſt have belonged to a gang of thieves, or made perhaps ſome figure amongſt the banditti.

The characters that hiſtorians give of ſome eminent perſons, are not always quite juſt. *Caligula*, for inſtance, has been repreſented by moſt of them as a monſter of cruelty. For my part, I cannot help conſidering him as *the beſt of emperors*; and have always admired the humanity of his wiſh, that the mob of Rome had but one neck, and himſelf a good ſharp ax to let drop upon it. A tyrant, whoſe taſte in the *virtu* led him to bloody exerciſes, would naturally have wiſhed that every Roman had at leaſt three heads, that he might never be diſtreſſed for want of *game*. Yet, after all, I'm afraid that this good-natured ſentiment of Caligula might, by ſome ſevere moraliſt, be imputed rather to indolence than to real humanity: for ſometimes, to be ſure, *Decipimur*

ſpecie recti, — We are impoſed upon by falſe appearances of virtue.

How!—Caliban turned critic!—Which Caliban? for they're a numerous family, bleſs their ſweet bodies! and ſeveral of them critics.—Lord! I mean the great lubberly ſea-calf that was found ſnoring with open mouth upon the beach after the laſt ſpring-tide.—O he!—Yes,—A critic to be ſure; and ſtupid as you may think him, he may be of excellent uſe to a reader who has his cue: for he muſt be read backwards; as the very reverſe of his opinions will generally, I don't ſay always, be juſt and true. Moſt of our preſent critics naturally enough put me in mind of an arch thing that a certain witty gentleman ſaid upon a ſimilar occaſion—*Optat Ephippia bos piger—The heavy ox would gladly be as fine as a horſe.* Juſt as if an awkward, clumſy, dancing bear ſhould be ſmit with the ambition of ſhining at the *Ridotto.*

As there are not perhaps, even in this ſenſible age above three or four infallible men in all England; and one of them is ſometimes inacceſſible from

from cruel fits of the aſthma, and ſome naſty ſcorbutic complaints: I ſhould think it beſt, in all doubtful critical deciſive ſituations, to conſult the greateſt fool of your acquaintance. And if he adviſes a voyage to the Eaſt Indies, be ſure to throw yourſelf into the firſt ſhip that is to ſail for Jamaica. I am told that ſome of the ancients uſed to pay a religious veneration to a certain kind of people. And they muſt have had ſome reaſon for it.

It would be a capital joke to obſerve how clever and ſenſible a fool thinks himſelf; if it was not ſo very common a ſight as it happens to be.

When there is the leaſt time for deliberation, one ſhould never do any thing in a hurry.—A friend of mine, who does not want for a reaſonable ſhare of pride, told me ſome days ago, that he ſhould never forgive himſelf for having once, in a fit of abſence and fluttering ſpirits, too readily executed what was propoſed, by a very impertinent meſſage which came to him from a pair of people, whom he hardly knew further than by name. Tho' at the ſame time it happened to be the very thing he had intended to do; for the ſake of avoid-

ing such unreasonable and illiberal reflections as in some situations are naturally to be apprehended from malice or ignorance.

What d'ye mean by saying always *same day, said day?* can't you say *the same day*, you barbarian?—I have often heard you say—*lay*, where you ought to say *lye*.—Bless your body! Why do you *put always*, instead of *always put*, the adverb after the verb?—It has a vile effect: but you may sufficiently flatten your language without it; for it is languid and drawling enough at the best. You have got a despicable habit too, of saying *neither* this *or* that. If you understood even the mechanical rules of grammar, you would say *neither* this *nor* that, *nor* any thing.—I suppose you'll set about coining new words by and by. But depend upon it you'll never make one that will find itself *admissible* to the English language. It will *respue* every word that is issued from your mint.—For my part, as it seems hitherto undetermined whether one should say *never* or *ever*; as in the following instance: *If a patriot was ever so active in attempting the ruin of his country* — till this subtle point

is decided, I shall sometimes say *ever*, sometimes *never*, just as it happens to suit my ear.

Pray, why don't you roll about in your carriage again, as you did when you were many years younger, and could not so easily afford it as now?—Why, sir, I am, thank Heaven, very able to walk: and without a great deal of exercise, I can neither eat nor sleep. Besides, sir, I always hated that jolting over the stones; and every good day, when I envied all foot passengers, I used to grudge myself the expence that either my own or other peoples vanity cost me in that article. Now, whenever it rains or the streets are dirty, I can command a coach or a chair for a mere trifle.—But at this rate who will employ you?—None I hope but a few friends, to whom I most devoutly wish perpetual health; and as soon as this life is grown insipid to them, an easy and quick passage to a better; that my tranquillity may never be interrupted by their distress—Nay, you are welcome to laugh at me as long as you please; but my present scheme is to pass the time as agreeably as I can; and to have no more to do with business than is consistent with that scheme.—Well thou'rt a

ſtrange fellow—a moſt unhappy mixture of ambition, indolence, love of pleaſure, and a kind of delicacy very ill calculated to ſucceed in the ſcramble of life.—No, I beg your pardon, I am pretty well cured of my ambition.—For when I ſee what ſort of geniuſes very commonly make no ſmall noiſe and buſtle—But I would not be thought to envy where I have always deſpiſed.—*Non equidem invideo, miror magis*—Tho' after all, there is but little room here for wonder, conſidering what kind of people conſtitute the great majority of all ranks in a certain overgrown town: and how even many of them that in other common affairs are not fools, to avoid the trouble of judging for themſelves, often follow the reſt in matters of the utmoſt conſequence to their own precious lives.

Impudence, the thriving ſon of Stupidity, will make very ſmall talents do great things.

That glaring dim-eyed pug is in ſuch vogue, that tho' I know him to be in point of underſtanding amongſt the moſt vulgar of the human race; I am almoſt tempted to impoſe ſo ſtrangely upon my

my own judgment as to imagine there is ſomething in him.

Pray who is that facetious gentleman?—He can't ſo much as aſk how you do without laughing—He muſt lead a merry life—d'ye know him?—Upon my word not I. But I have obſerved that the dulleſt people generally laugh the moſt: from a conſciouſneſs perhaps, of their own inſipidity, which they endeavour to diſguiſe by the exerciſe of laughing.

For heaven's ſake my dear friend, don't make a trade of laughing. If your aim is to be witty every hour of the day, you'll turn out a teizing diſagreeable companion. When the weather or the company is againſt you keep yourſelf quiet; and never be aſhamed to be dull amongſt blockheads, let them be never ſo noiſy. In converſation, wit ſhould be accidental; otherways you muſt naturally deſpiſe its vanity and affectation—Meantime after mangling a joke that has thrown ten or a dozen ſenſible people into a hearty fit of laughing, don't be ſo cruel as to doubt whether it really was a joke or not; and to conclude, becauſe you

you cannot recollect all the circumſtances, that the mirth it produced muſt have been owing to the manner of ſaying it. Beſides, that ſometimes a very good joke can hardly be repeated without loſing its ſpirit; the beſt jokes, tho' they are felt immediately by people of proper ſenſations, are not always eaſily explained as to the *mode of Titillation*, with which they affect the *riſible Faculty*; except perhaps by ſome phlegmatic metaphyſical connoiſſeur in wit, who never once felt a good joke in his life.—Pray, what is it that pleaſes you in the ſmell of a Jonquil, a Roſe, or a Gilly-flower?—If you're reſolved not to enjoy their fragrance till that is explained, you may as well ſhut up your noſe for ever.

I have ſeen a moſt unnatural extravagant piece of abſurdity received with great applauſe; while flaſhes of true wit have paſt without the leaſt notice.

It is ſo eaſy to tickle fools with blaſphemy, petulance, and any kind of indecent ribaldry, that theſe are the common reſources of every crazy impudent fellow who would paſs for a wit.

You

You never meet with any impertinence in the company of well-bred people — while you are decent and inoffenfive yourfelf, you have no difagreeable behaviour in any fhape to apprehend from them. And the more wit any man has, you will, almoft without exception, find him the lefs apt to be petulant.

There is nothing fo provoking as the impertinent compliments of a fool who wifhes you well; who fhocks you while he thinks he is doing you a pleafure.

It happened, as I have been informed, that feveral years ago a gentleman, whofe name I cannot at prefent recollect, obferved to Mr. T. that Mr. B. though he paft for a man of genius, was rather a hum-drum companion, and feldom faid any thing very remarkable. To which Mr. M. told me that Mr. T. replied, — Aye, but he never fails to improve what *you* fay—This feemed to be performing the part of rather a cold back friend. For I have known Mr. T. fhine whole evenings together upon hints in a manner whifpered to him by the forefaid Mr. B—; while he

happened

happened to be either too modeſt or too indolent to purſue them himſelf.—But a man of tickliſh ſenſations may find it impoſſible to be happy and in good humour in the company of certain particular people, whom at the ſame time he may perhaps regard for ſome good qualities.

I forget who told me that Mr. T. ſhould once upon a time have aſked how a certain gentleman, whoſe name has ſlipt through my memory, could poſſibly be a poet; as he had never once ſeen a hill.—Now I apprehend that Mr. T. muſt have been miſinformed here; for I remember to have met the very gentleman in queſtion one Sunday evening, I think it might have been towards June or July, upon the utmoſt ſummit of *Conſtitution Hill.*

One evening, after the reſt of the company were gone, that moſt delightful companion Mr. Q. who *ſhould have died hereafter*, told an acquaintance of mine, that in caſe he outlived him he would do a friendly office to his memory; and aſked him where he would chuſe to have his buſt ſet up. *Any where*, replied the other, after thanking

thanking Mr. Q. for the great honour he intended him, *but in Weſtminſter Abbey.*

To come to an end with anecdotes of this kind; one who had publiſhed ſome things with tolerable ſucceſs, told me, that his having paſt for a poet, had done him more miſchief, than any ſenſible perſon could eaſily conceive; but at the ſame time he could not help owning, that it had oftener than once procured him the honour of a bow in paſſing along the Strand or Fleetſtreet, from a gentleman with whom he never had any further acquaintance. I have, oftener than once, heard the ſame perſon mention one circumſtance with particular regret; that he had never been able to diſcover or gueſs amongſt all his acquaintances, to whom he was obliged for an elegant preſent, left at his lodgings ſome years ago by a gentleman who did not leave his name; and to whom, of courſe, he could not expreſs his due acknowledgments for a favour which he highly values.

Sir, ſays one, this piece, even if all the parts could be well performed, would hardly ſucceed here — It might perhaps at Paris; where every

one that goes to the play, is as ſeriouſly attentive as the moſt devout people here are to a Sermon. But in ſome places natural and unexaggerated repreſentations of life are not felt; the audience muſt be kept awake with ſhew, noiſe and buſtle. Here the genteeler part of the company are indeed merely *ſpectators*; they go to ſee, and diſplay themſelves to one another. And what other reaſonable motive can they have?—conſidering what kind of entertainment the ſtage for the moſt part exhibits at preſent?

I tell you, ſir, ſays another upon a different occaſion, this is ſtupid, indecent, villainous traſh —But have you read it?—Yes, above a dozen lines—That's hardly enough; read the whole and then judge.—God forbid!—muſt I eat a whole ſaddle of mutton before I have a right to ſay it is vile rotten ſtuff?—

That a writer with very middling and even contemptible parts, may do a great deal more miſchief than thoſe of the firſt abilities can do good is too evident.—How much more ſucceſsful have a parcel of indecent, profligate, lying, inflammatory

tory ſcribblers been of late years, in ſtupifying, and brutaliſing a whole nation; than thoſe elegant, genteel moral writers, who ſhone about the beginning of this century, were in refining and poliſhing it!—But it is much eaſier to ſet fire to a palace or a temple, than to white-waſh a cottage.

Some of thoſe black-guard geniuſes are Poets too, God wot!—With crazy, ſtupid heads and bad hearts; without one ſpark of imagination; without either ſenſe, verſification or language; they are Poets: and the fitteſt indeed to gain the applauſe of the vulgar, *great and ſmall, high and low.* For they ſcribble juſt ſuch traſh as any of the rabble would that could ſcribble at all. Their works are truely *adapted to the meaneſt capacities.* Their poetry is the dulleſt proſe ſpurr'd up into an awkward hobbling Aſs-trot. Quite oppoſite to Orpheus, and thoſe *real* poets whoſe moral Harmony firſt humanized the woodland ſavages, and tamed them into ſocial life; theſe nightingales of Newgate, theſe black ſwans of Fleet-ditch, theſe infernal Screech-owls, ſing nothing but ſongs of diſcord and ſedition, and treaſon. But not all the rage and fury of the moſt rancourous hearts, can

rouſe the poetical impotence of thoſe Bards, to any thing above the inſipidity of flat unmannerly abuſe; which they and their admirers call ſatire. However, they cannot laſt long. One may venture to prophecy a ſhort life, and an infamous memory to the ſtupid ditties of all ſuch Poets; and it is an indiſputable truth that no Muſe ever yet dwelt in the breaſt of a ſcoundrel.

Several of theſe detached Sentences and Reveries, were ſet down as materials for a poetical ſatire; but as the general run of readers here don't underſtand verſe, except it is ſo ſtupid as none but a muſe-bit blockhead can poſſibly write, it is ſaving ſome needleſs pains to ſend them out in their preſent ſhape. So let them go: and if our noble maſters the Mobility don't reliſh them, ſo much the better. They are the more likely to procure the approbation of thoſe few judges to whoſe praiſe alone one would chuſe to aſpire.

A

PLAN

OF A

DEDICATION.

The late Mr. Cibber addreſſed the Apology for his Life *to a certain Gentleman*; whereas I LANCELOT TEMPLE preſume to addreſs my SKETCHES

To an uncertain Gentleman.

SIR,

I Humbly beg leave to lay the following ſheets at your noble and magnificent feet. In an age where ſcarce any thing but falſe genius, and the moſt impudent quackery in every ſhape, meets with encouragement, I appeal to *you*, whom I have always deemed * *the conſummate judge of lite-*

* This compliment was made, ſeveral years ago, by a writer of uncommon genius and abilities, in a Dedication to a certain diſtinguiſhed perſonage; though ſome ſay it has never yet appeared upon what foundation.

rary merit; and I fly in a fluttering hurry to your *protection*. It would offend your modesty, Sir, should I give way to the enthusiasm with which I have constantly admired your amiable behaviour in private life; in the various characters of son, father, brother, husband, uncle, cousin, lover, friend, debtor, creditor, master, &c. &c. together with your † *superlative powers of charming in conversation*. — But good God with what superior *brilliancy* you shine the * *Cynosure* of state, to guide its weather-beaten hulk to the port of safety and tranquillity! — To your wise, able, frugal, and most strictly œconomical conduct, throughout the operations of a needless and pernicious war, which to be sure you found unavoidable, it is chiefly owing that your country makes at present such a figure as astonishes all its neighbours. The raging flames of Vesuvius, are a paultry, blackguard, patriotic illumination, compared to its lustre.—You shine, Sir, equally in peace. To your noble perseverance and obstinacy in the cause of liberty and religion, this island owes the firm,

† This is one of many news-paper compliments which I am *credibly informed* some *Patriots* from day to day have slily made to themselves, with great success, amongst a parcel of blind, ignorant, credulous people, who never will learn to smell a rat, but where there is none.

* The star called the Dog's Tail.

steady,

steady, manly, administration of its government, not less wise than virtuous; and the capital of your country ought particularly to thank you for the present state of its incomparable police. The nice discernment too, and the distinguishing taste you have shewn in patronizing Genius in all its variety of shapes, is none of your smallest excellencies.—But I beg pardon, Sir: for I am sure you would never forgive me if I should attempt to violate your delicacy with any thing so fulsome as bare-faced praise.—Your virtues, Sir, and your fine qualities, are innumerable and beyond all expression. I could go further; but it would be invidious to say, that in an age most contemptibly weak, and most shockingly wicked, you stand almost alone to support the dignity of human nature.

But as I know, Sir, you despise every thing that looks like flattery; and are too delicate to bear even the justest praise with any degree of patience: to convince you, Sir, that after all this appearance of compliment I am no flatterer; and to shew you the sincerity of my friendship (begging pardon, my most noble and sublime Patron, for the familiarity of the word)—As a sudden squall

of

of praiſe may eaſily overſet a veſſel that perhaps carries more ſail than ballaſt; and, to ſhift from one metaphor to another, as I ſhould be ſorry to give you ſuch an over-doſe of a ſweet poiſon as might drive you out of your ſenſes, and make you expoſe yourſelf ſtark naked through the whole town, as mad as any king who holds his reſidence at either of the palaces in Moorfields; I muſt be ſo plain as to tell you, Sir, that I do *not* as an author ſolicit your *protection*.—Bleſs your dear ſweet *protection!*—If you have any ſecret to protect ſtupid writing from the contempt of good judges, keep up your *protection* for ſome other occaſion. It is not impoſſible that you may, one time or another, be ſmit with the vanity of turning author yourſelf. It might happen next moon; if it was not for *Arthur's* or *New-market*.

But ſhall I at laſt fairly and honeſtly preſent you with a peep of the cloven foot from under the long black gown of diſſimulation and hypocriſy! —You ſhall have it at once, without the leaſt ceremony—Bleſs me, did you think me in earneſt all this time!—Are you ſo ſlow of apprehenſion, my noble Patron, as not to perceive that the high

praiſes

praiſes with which I have at laſt in a whimſical fit taken it into my head to tickle your ear, are nothing but mere raſcally compliments, without the leaſt particle of ſincerity?—Is your vanity ſo irrecoverably blind, as to make it neceſſary to tell you, that all this is nothing but an exerciſe in the thriving art of adulation; very fairly practiſed upon one who has ſo long fed *me* with the delicious repaſt of flattery.—For which I have been near the eighth part of a century over head and ears in your debt; and now endeavour to pay you my arrears at once in your own counters—Mean time I have the *honour* to be with the moſt profound reſpect and eſteem, and the moſt inviolable attachment,

Sir,

Your moſt faithful

and *ſuperlatively* devoted

humble ſervant,

LANCELOT TEMPLE.

THE END.